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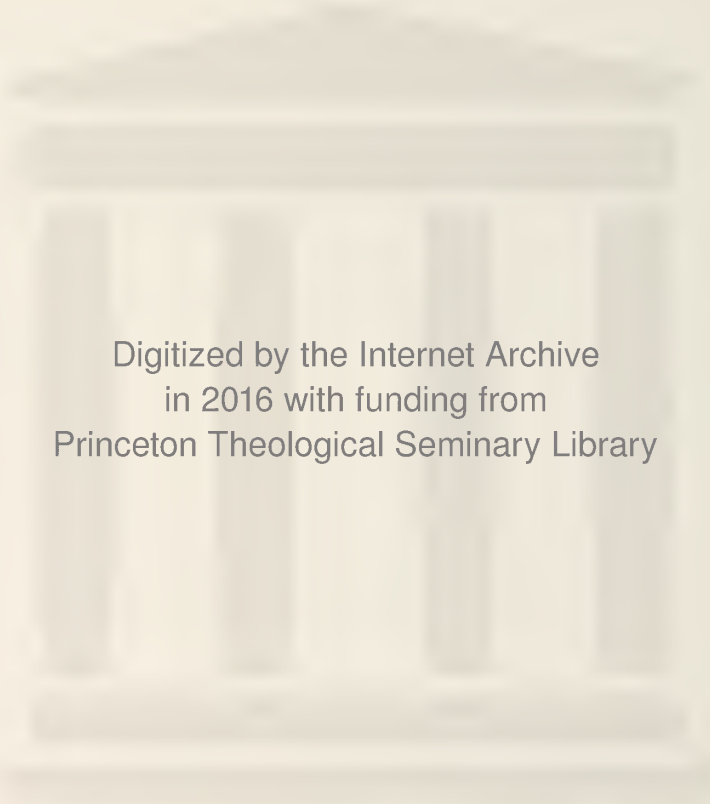
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# THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 2 NEW SERIES 1987

## WARFIELD LECTURE

Issues in Contemporary Spirituality:  
The Upsurge of Spiritual Movements

ROY W. FAIRCHILD

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Searching for the Millennium in America

JAMES H. MOORHEAD

## PRINCETONIANA

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Early Princeton Seminary Foreign Missionaries

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The Multiple Purposes of Biblical Speech Acts

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Ronald C. White, Jr., EDITOR

Daniel L. Migliore, BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Lynn H. Kosanovich, ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR

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# Issues in Contemporary Spirituality: The Upsurge of Spiritual Movements

by ROY W. FAIRCHILD

*Roy W. Fairchild is professor emeritus of spiritual life and psychology at San Francisco Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, where he has also taught Christian education and social psychology. Trained in psychology by Carl Rogers and Virginia Satir and at the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco, Fairchild was also director of San Francisco's Center for Spiritual Disciplines. His publications include Christians in Families and Finding Hope Again: A Pastor's Guide to Counseling Depressed Persons.*

## Warfield Lecture

IT is truly a privilege and an honor to participate in the Warfield Lectures and to renew many acquaintances. It is a challenge to look at the burgeoning field of spirituality with you and to discuss what the church, which is Reformed and always reforming, can learn from the upsurge and how it can evaluate the current emphasis on so-called spiritual experience. As you know, you have many experts here who have been at this very task for some time. David Willis has probed many of the important issues in his book, *Daring Prayer*. James Loder has greatly enhanced our understanding of convictional knowing in his breakthrough book, *The Transforming Moment*. The importance of the "will" has been sensitively probed by James Lapsley; Don Capps has brought the critical use of the Bible back into the center of pastoral care; and Craig Dykstra has critically examined faith stage theory. You are blessed! With the rich resources you have here, I wondered why you wanted an outside voice on this theme; I run the risk of bringing coals to Newcastle. I was reminded of the Senator who gave a speech and was approached by a constituent who gushed, "Oh, Senator, that speech was so inspiring; it was simply superfluous!" He replied, tongue in cheek, "I'm glad you liked it. I hope to have it published posthumously." To which she responded, "Oh, I hope that will be real soon."

For five years I have had the privilege of administering and teaching in a program of Christian spirituality at San Francisco Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union. My journey has taken me into the vast literature of the history, theology, and psychology of spirituality, into dialogue with hundreds of people who are on a spiritual quest, and into debate with many leading representatives of spiritual renewal groups—charismatic, born-again, quasi-eastern, and therapeutic. The journey has been both stim-

ulating and frustrating. Stimulating, because I am basically a psychologist of religion and in my thirty-five years of teaching in college, university, and seminary settings, I cannot remember a time when so much interest has been manifested in religious experience, prayer, and meditation. Frustrating, because I see very little evidence of mainstream Protestantism wrestling with the relationship of spiritual experience and the biblical-theological tradition of which we are a part. I have a conviction that the weakness of the church and seminaries in responding to the various spiritual expressions of our day is not a matter of indifference; it is found in confusion and uncertainty about who God is, and how God touches the actuality of our experience.

Today we find a great hunger for the inward nurturing of the soul. We all wish for a theological diagnostician of the stature of Jonathan Edwards who, as a pastor during the Great Awakening, helped other pastors and theologians understand and evaluate religious affections awakened in the revivals. We yearn for psychologists and philosophers with the depth and openness of a William James to be travel guides to the interior journeys of our day. Now that Karl Barth has made his singular contribution, we need to visit again with Frederick Schleiermacher and Rudolf Otto to see why religious experience had such an authoritative place in their thinking. The process of exploration has started afresh. Both personal and academic resources are multiplying. The sixty-volume Paulist Press project entitled "Classics in Western Spirituality," begun in 1978, is well under way with texts of the spirituality of Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker, and Native American traditions already available. This year Crossroad will bring out the first volume on Christian Spirituality in its *Encyclopedia of World Spiritualities*. These need to be probed, but perhaps even more necessary is a grass-roots effort, the creation of a corps of believers who can listen and pray well, take the religious experience of each other seriously, and learn to think theologically again. Through these lectures, I hope to stimulate interest in this venture. They are intended to be both theological and the testimony of a personal quest with many indications of seeking and perhaps all too little evidence of finding.

Tonight I want, first of all, to look briefly with you at the word "spirituality," which still makes many Protestants uneasy. Second, I will discuss some of the manifestations of the spiritual quest in our day. Third, I want to suggest some of the conditions in our society which have accelerated the inward search. And last, I want to identify a few of the issues which we will be exploring this week.

## I

*What is "spirituality"?*

As used today, the word is an umbrella that can cover anything from encounters with the I Ching and near-death experiences to the contemplative prayer of Thomas Merton. It is so elastic that both religious and non-religious experiences fall within its boundaries. In fact, many persons counterpose religious and spiritual against each other. Bette Midler, on the NBC Today Show, said, "I am not a religious person, but I am deeply spiritual." It's okay to be spiritual now. One's search need not take place within a church or synagogue which are often seen as inhibiting the spiritual. In the culture at large, spirituality is often used to designate an interior search for meaning and wholeness. And a very large cafeteria of introspective and meditative techniques and methods promising fulfillment are offered now, most through psychotherapeutic auspices.

We are interested, however, in a Christian understanding of spirituality which, as a term, has slowly replaced the older words of the Protestant tradition—piety, devotion, Godliness, holiness, the devout life. Part of the acceptance of the word is due to the increased congeniality between Protestants and Catholics since Vatican II, since "spirituality" is a Catholic word, used extensively in various ways since the 11th century. But we also have a common Biblical tradition. The adjective "spiritual," from which the noun "spirituality" is derived, is, of course, from the Apostle Paul, used to describe that which pertains to the Holy Spirit of God. The theology of the Spirit began to develop in the Old Testament reflection on the breadth or *ruach* of Yahweh and was further developed in the New Testament reflection on the *pneuma* or Spirit which almost immediately came to be understood as the spirit of the risen Christ. Paul used the adjective "spiritual" for any aspects of life which were under the influence of the spirit of God. Importantly, in 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15 he contrasted the "spiritual person" (*pneumatikos anthropos*) with the natural person (*psychikos anthropos*). It is clear he is not contrasting an ethereal person with a full-bodied person. The spiritual person is one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. You are spiritual when you have God's life in you—in, with, and under all you are. *Ruach*, *pneuma*, *spiritus* all are equivalent to breath or life. Breathing cannot be lost without losing life. Therefore, for the New Testament, the opposite of spirit is not physical matter but death and that which deadens. Christian spirituality is a wholistic concept. As Paul puts it in Romans 12:1, "I appeal to you, by the

mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship." The person is seen as a whole self, an energized, embodied spirit, a unity which is expressed in the here and now, related to concrete persons, daily events, and given things. The ordinary always has a spiritual dimension or interpretation, if one has eyes to see, as we recall from Jesus' parables. In the fourth Gospel, Jesus is coming to Jerusalem for the last time and hears a voice from heaven speaking to him. The crowd was divided on what happened. Some said it thundered and some said an angel had spoken. The same experience is understood in different ways (John 12:28, 29).

I would define Christian spirituality as one's "unique and personal response to the call of Christ through the Spirit in the world of inner and outer realities." It is a lived-out Christian experience. Christian spirituality is *incarnational*, by which I mean it denies any basic dualism between spirit and matter. Unlike neo-platonic spirituality, which is still very much in evidence, Christian spirituality is not detachment from the human world in order to come closer to God. It affirms, rather, the descending and irreversible entrance of God into the world, taking on the material, the flesh, so that it becomes a permanent abode of God, and through which God expresses himself/herself to us forever. I want to focus on two aspects of this incarnational spirituality which I will try to demonstrate in each lecture.

First, the incarnation of God in human life implies that the faculties of God's creatures are enhanced when God dwells with us. God did not displace them but gives us those capacities, and fulfills them. We do not give up our thinking, our willing, our feeling, our imagining, but their direction is changed. As John Cobb puts it so well:

The purpose of spiritual discipline cannot be to empty ourselves so that something external can replace what is there. It must be to align ourselves with the directions in which God is already drawing us. Christian spiritual discipline is getting "with it" and the "it" we get "with" is what moves us in the direction pointed by Christ (*To Pray or Not to Pray*, Upper Room, p. 18).

Second, incarnational spirituality means that our knowledge of God, our communion with God, is never just a one-on-one vertical relationship with God. God is a reality which pervades all particular realities. Our communion with God is a "mediated immediacy," to use a phrase of the late theologian John Baillie. He said:



I believe the view to be capable of defense that no one of the four subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, our corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others (*Our Knowledge of God* [Charles Scribners, 1939], p. 178).

When you listen silently through prayer, through people, and through nature and events, it will be very personal. It may seem very solitary, but it never is. God is in the very midst of us, in the very fabric of our lives, in all of its dimensions. There is always an organic connection and relationship between God and God's creation. This biblical assumption has radical consequences, as we shall see. Judged by these two biblical criteria, we will find much of what passes as Christian experience to be inauthentic.

## II

### *What current manifestations of spirituality do we see?*

As in other periods of spiritual upsurge, we may be tempted to believe that any spirituality is better than none. How do we discern that which is authentic? The "experience merchants" are hard at work in our culture, offering every kind of approach to the interior life. People move from one promise to another. I overheard this conversation at the university: "You are still doing the Zen trip. I stayed with that for a year or so but now the Native American Shaman quest is where it's at for me." We may laugh at the samplers and the Don Juans in the church who care only about their psychological "highs." But something more serious is going on. What can we learn from it? Amos Wilder asked:

Is it not true that Christianity has a need of recurrent baptism in the secular, in the human, to renew itself . . . to be saved over and over again from a spurious and phantom Christ? . . . Theology and witness today will be impoverished unless they take account of secular [humanity] in all [its] dynamics (*The New Voice* [Herder & Herder, 1969], p. 238).

Just ten years ago the Gallup poll tapped the varieties of the spiritual quest in the United States. It was discovered that six million Americans had tried Transcendental Meditation, five million were involved in some form of yoga, five million had links with some group that emphasized mysticism within an Eastern religious framework, and three million would identify themselves as "charismatics" in various denominations of the Christian church. If we add the millions who rely upon drugs to change their con-

sciousness as a part of the spiritual quest, we begin to see that many are seeking for an intensity of experience not normally found in mainline churches.

Perhaps the most interesting data comes from the 1973 research of Andrew Greeley and his associates, using a nationwide sample of 1500 adults to discover the extent to which American adults claim to have encountered a transcendent power, something that had lifted them out of themselves sometime in their lives. Later, in Great Britain, 1865 Britons were asked if they had ever been aware of, or influenced by, a presence or power different from their everyday lives, whether or not this was referred to as God. In both studies, about 35% said they had had such experiences, and among the better educated the figure was 56%.

Sir Alister Hardy, founding director of the Religious Experience Research Unit of Manchester College, Oxford, has since gathered thirty thousand pages of self-reports from five thousand individuals who claim to have had religious or paranormal experiences. His research team developed ninety-two categories of experiences, among them a sense of mystical oneness, guiding voices, a sense of timelessness, a sense of presence, increased energy, love, and well-being. Some were "peak experiences" of high intensity, and some of pervasive calm. In these modern researches, few of the accounts were as dramatic as the experience of Stephen Bradley reported in William James' classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

I thought I saw the Savior, by faith, in human shape, for about one second in the room, with arms extended, appearing to say to me, Come. The next day I rejoiced with trembling; soon after my happiness was so great that I said I wanted to die; this world had no place in my affections . . . and every day appeared to me as the Sabbath. I had an ardent desire that all [humanity] might feel as I did; I wanted them all to love God supremely (William James [1902], pp. 189-90).

In Hardy's subjects, we see less specific imagery:

When alone in deep meditation I "reach God" and tears fill my eyes and a great sense of peace and wholeness seems to possess me. It is a kind of catharsis but is not based on emotion as far as I can tell. It is an intellectual exercise which nearly always has physical results, in a feeling of freshness and restored vitality (Hardy, *The Spiritual Nature of Man* [Oxford, Clarendon, 1979], p. 61).

There were mellowed accounts in the research role also, reports of seeing the transcendent in ordinary experience.

A mother bends over a baby's crib. The child is peacefully asleep. She notices as though for the first time the shape of his tiny ear. It is the greatest work of art she has ever seen. Peace and joy surge through her, and a pale misty blue light seems to absorb her child and her for a time that seems both like an instant and an eternity (Hardy, p. 61).

One of the fascinating and disquieting aspects of the Greeley and Hardy researches was the discovery that, while a larger number of people had had this kind of experience many times, they were reticent to disclose it to anyone, especially to pastors. However, Greeley's most recent research as of a year ago shows a clear trend over the last ten years; now, more people than ever are willing to report such psychic or spiritual experiences, about 43% of those for whom they have occurred. Enthusiasts for the ecstatic or unusual often argue that the incidence of such experiences is rising fast and that perhaps mysticism in the broadest sense is a biological necessity of the human being.

I favor a different explanation. When well-known persons like actress Shirley MacLaine disclose their own ecstatic experiences, they make it easier for us to talk about our own. Last January she played herself in a dramatic TV miniseries entitled "Out On A Limb" in which she told of her mystical encounters, out-of-the-body trips, past lives, and spiritual guides. My immediate skeptical response was, "Just because she's experienced it doesn't mean it really happened." For her disclosures received a tremendous response across the country in church and out. Two of her books are best-sellers. In commenting on the response to the series, Harvey Cox of Harvard says, "This generation and the one before it are mystically starved."

When the late Carl Rogers, respected as a hard-nosed researcher in psychotherapy, spoke positively about his own spiritual experiences after a lifetime of aversion to religious life, people began to open up. At a seminar in 1985 he revealed with great emotion his personal contact with his deceased wife, Helen, and how, in her closing days, she had visions of spirits lifting her body off of the bed, it being bathed in a white light. Rogers' revelation freed dozens of therapists of my acquaintance to talk about their search for an ultimacy beyond psychology.

But it is not only the hunger for experience of transcendence we see now, it is the revival of interest in prayer and meditation as well. Meditation is espoused widely now in the health fields, and research studies on its effect abound. The *New York Times* recently said that the revival of interest in prayer is "the most powerful, least documented development within American religion today. . . . The earlier (born again) movement was marked by

outward revivalism and dramatic conversion, the newer phase emphasized the interior nurture of the soul and deepening of faith." In more than six hundred retreat centers in the United States, the current focus is on prayer and training spiritual guides to help seekers in the prayer life.

I sense an ambivalence in many Reformed and Lutheran theologians and pastors about this trend. They are afraid that a reemphasis on prayer, religious experience, and interior life will lead us to wallow in our subjectivity. They suspect it will throw us back to the ascetic life, privatism, and salvation by works which the Reformation was born to eradicate. They remember that spiritual direction was, from the outset, heavily discredited by its close relationship to priestly authority, the confessional, monastic life, monetary penances, and indulgences. To be sure, most of those issues are dead now, but a persistent fear remains. If we cultivate the interior life of prayer will we not turn our backs on our prophetic tasks? The well-known Quaker, Douglas Steere, visited Karl Barth at his home in Bonn in the 1930s. He had just visited the Benedictine monastery at Maria Laach and was enriched and centered, as he said, by his time of prayer and his participation in the Benedictine liturgical cycle. He shared his retreat experience with Barth who promptly repudiated his experience as having not the slightest significance for the Christian life. Barth insisted that, for himself, only the supreme act of grace in Christ was sufficient to save him from his sin, and that anything other than an acceptance of this fact was irrelevant and self-deceiving. At that time Barth focused on Christ *for* us but not Christ *within* us as the source of transformation, not understanding that for Douglas Steere prayer is a way of *responding to* that grace by waking up and paying attention more carefully to God's presence in and will for his life.

Meanwhile, not waiting for Presbyterians to work out their theology of prayer and experience, Roman Catholic and Anglican communities have spawned training programs bursting at the seams with students wanting to know more about how to pray and how to listen to the Word of God. Why this ground swell of interest?

### III

#### *What are the conditions in our society accelerating the inward search?*

If I had to select certain aspects of our cultural life that have accelerated this upsurge of interest, I would nominate three ingredients. First, it may be a reaction to the rapid change and fragmenting pluralism of our society. Consider that just thirty-five years ago there were no heart transplants, no



contraceptive pills, no in vitro fertilizations, no genetic engineering, no moon landings, no civil rights or women's liberation movements, no jet travel, no sensitivity groups, no OPEC, no SST, SDI, est, TA, TM, ICBM, no African nations free of colonial rule. Since then we have experienced a sexual revolution, a tremendous increase in divorce and one-parent families, three economic recessions, two major wars, two presidents forced from office, a third assassinated, and a fourth almost assassinated. What can one depend upon as stable, as unchanging in one's outer life?

The pluralism of our society means that the possibilities of individual choice are almost unlimited, compared to a society based on tradition. We have so many answers to Aldous Huxley's deceptively simple question, "What are people for?" The modern person is less likely to be a Presbyterian or Roman Catholic by heritage and inertia. The search for experiential certitude, the desire for an experience of a timeless "now," is one motivation to move behind the complexities of our Western technological society. People are asking, most often with the promptings of eastern thought, can I find a level of consciousness that goes deeper than a fast-changing illusory world?

A second reason for the upsurge in religious interest may be the extreme individualism and isolation of persons in our society, the alienation which is reflected in so many current novels, plays, and films. People are crying out for ways to be themselves and to be in communion with fellow human beings, the world, and the cosmos. The feminist movement and the environmental awakening which started in the 1960s profoundly challenged the assumptions by which we live, especially that we are isolated atoms not connected with one another and with nature. These movements, along with liberation theology, raised questions about a way of life—often supported by the biblical tradition—that control is desirable—control over women and control over nature and oppressed people. Control increases our isolation from one another. True intimacy is not possible when control is sought. The "new right" movement in this country seems intent on maintaining this control, without considering the consequences. Whenever the Cowboy myth is dominant in our culture and the military is in the ascendancy, we find women denigrated and assigned the "bit" parts in the drama.

People try to escape isolation and control by others in many ways; the fantastic emphasis on explicit sexual linkage is one such attempt. The search for contact (slowed down by AIDS) leads men and women, feeling isolated in the midst of 200 million other Americans, to embark on a series of genital encounters which leave them at the end much as they started, still isolated, still surrounded by a cocoon of silence, spiritual poverty, and pseudo-inti-

macy. Sartre said, "Hell is other people." T. S. Eliot opined, "Hell is alone." The hell of this modern person is being alone with other people. An inappropriate bonding doesn't help.

People are crying out for an opportunity for deep to speak unto deep in this nation of strangers. They are hungry to have their life stories truly heard by another. They try therapy but discover few therapists who can deal with the spiritual search that lies behind so many psychological disorders. The well-known psychoanalyst, Allen Wheelis, confesses that

When you leave your analyst's office for the last time . . . just at that moment . . . you feel the ache of longing . . . for something that has no name, lies beyond your grasp, and you know that analysis, however fine its net, could not capture this elusive anguish (*How People Change* [Harper & Row], p. 5).

Carl Jung had come to this insight much earlier, concluding that

The greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. . . . They can never be solved, but only outgrown. This outgrowing requires a new level of consciousness. Some higher interest appears on the patient's horizon and through this broadening of outlook the insoluble problem loses its urgency . . . confronted with a new and stronger life urge . . . (*Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 538).

Psychotherapy is swinging strongly toward psycho-pharmacology, on the one hand, and toward Eastern religious thought on the other, as the earlier hope for the messiah in traditional psychotherapy has slowly ebbed away. The search for individual union with the ultimate outside a community will, I predict, be likewise frustrated. "We" precedes "I" in our search for meaning. Most contemporary novelists write of a world of rootless and isolated consciousness where, as Lewis Simpson put it, "the covenant with memory and history has been abrogated in favor of the existential self." Robert Bellah and his associates have documented this opinion in their book, *Habits of the Heart*, in which the privatism of our time is seen as pathology. But the yearning is there for something more. We've seen the pull of Garrison Keillor's mythical small town of Lake Wobegon, "the town that time forgot and decades cannot improve." His radio shows touch the deep need in our time for images of belonging, connecting, shared memories, staying, committing, and dwelling together in integrity. It is a message for "a nation of strangers," as Vance Packard has described us.

Third, the search for spiritual experience can be seen as a rebellion against

the high-tech mentality of our age, in which the emphasis is on speed, superficiality, and repetitiveness. The style of the computer which responds in milliseconds (and in the future at the speed of light)—this computer is becoming a model for human interaction. I have talked with the president of a large company which uses computers extensively and he and his board have made it possible for employees to receive periodic therapy because they begin, after a while, to react to persons as they do to their computers; they respond flatly without feeling, they expect a very rapid response to anything they communicate, and they become inflexible in their relationships. This president, with a deep social conscience, is worried that employees are being conditioned to respond to any leader who will give them predictable structure and who will tap into their repressed emotional needs. With Erich Fromm he feels they will “escape from freedom.” In the light of these trends, we can understand why Alfred North Whitehead claimed that inward religion was “an offensive against the repetitive mechanism of the universe.

The fury of haste, so accentuated by modern technology, sets us up for going through life without probing beneath the surface of any event, or breaking through to the sustaining mystery out of which it came. So how can any poet, artist, or prophet speak to people caught in a horizontal burst of speed that resembles a machine? When Douglas Steere visited the great scholar of the mystical life, Evelyn Underhill, he asked her if she had experienced many of the ecstasies that had been witnessed to by the mystics she wrote about. Looking directly at him she said no, she had not had the major experiences that marked the great mystics, but that she *had* experienced from time to time what it was to have “a slowing down.” Until we can find a solitude where we are beyond the grip of the surface self with all its plans, desires, and distractions, we will not hear the whisper of God.

No one can say with any finality what are the factors that have prompted the present spiritual ferment in our culture. But *a priori* the possibility cannot be excluded that God is the origin of the search for God we see, a possibility real to Pascal but which to Durkheim and Freud was simply inadmissible. What the church does about this manifested hunger remains to be seen. If it would take its clues from the Reformed tradition, it will always see spirituality is larger than the individual's interior quest.

For John Calvin, three pursuits of the Christian life can never be separated from one another: knowledge, experience, and service (see chart). First is “knowledge and understanding” of God, humanity, and creation, which come through careful understanding of the Word revealed in the creation, Bible, and Christ. Second is the recognition of “experiences and encounters”

with God through prayer, sacraments, and other disciplines. Third is the sharing of one's life through service of God and neighbor and the concern for justice. In subsequent lectures we will see the implications of this integral spirituality in a day of gluttony for spiritual highs.

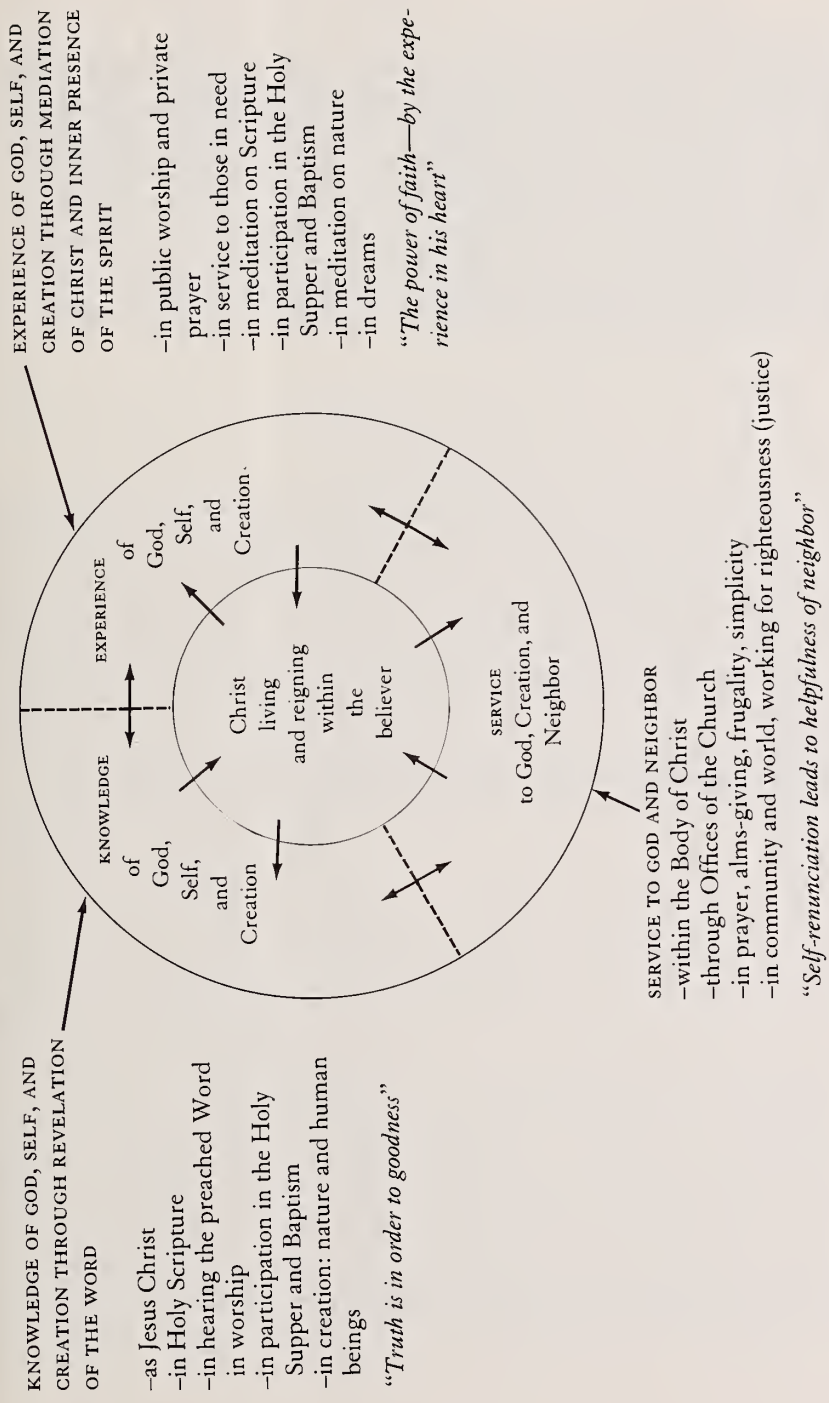
There are many questions we need to explore along the way. What is the place of experience in Christian spirituality? How important is tradition in interpreting those experiences? What kind of prayer leads out of narcissism into prophetic action? What is the relationship of our gifts to the work of the Holy Spirit? What is the meaning of self-denial in the Christian journey? Do our self-image and image of God stand in the way of sensing God's presence? How do we discern the spirits when we pray or decide? What will it take for us to be spiritual guides in the midst of the spiritual explosion of our day? How do we deal with our dispirited selves? Some of these issues are addressed by Reformed theology. Some are still to be engaged seriously by those of us who claim this tradition. Some were out of the purview of our fathers and mothers in the faith and face us freshly and insistently.

While many seek an ecstasy which will end their isolation, meaninglessness, and anxiety, we need to remind ourselves, in closing, how God's Holy Spirit continues to work in quiet, unobtrusive but effective ways to bring God's kingdom. I have a friend who has taught at the University of California and who, as a graduate student, went down several eastern paths of spirituality in his search for ultimacy. The Christian way was pretty low on his list of promising paths until he felt he met the living Christ in an unexpected encounter. He tells his story:

Once I was in Vienna after a two-week illness in a little Austrian village. I had spent most of my travel money on medicine and doctors and used my last bit to take a train to Vienna. I had no clue as to where I could find my friends who had been waiting for me earlier. I was lost and hungry and depressed. As I was standing in one of the streetcar stations in central Vienna, tired, discouraged, and trying to figure out what to do, a little, old wrinkled woman (whose job it was to sweep out the station) came over to me and asked if I was hungry. Even before I could answer, she took her lunch from a brown bag and offered me half! I was moved. She not only helped my aching hunger, but lifted my spirit in an unforgettable way.

I have never forgotten her—the warmth of her face, the graciousness of her gift, the youthful sparkle in her eyes. We talked for more than an hour about her life. She was raised in the country, knowing nothing

# John Calvin's Multi-dimensional Understanding of Christian Life and Spirituality\*



\* Chart adapted from one created by Kenneth Corr, Jr., student-intern in the Resource Center for Christian Spiritual Disciplines at San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1982. Note that three elements will always be interacting in a Reformed approach to pastoral care and spiritual guidance: care of *mind-heart*, care of the *spirit*, and care of the *world*.



but hard work on a farm. She had lost her husband and two sons in the Resistance to the Nazis. Only her daughter survived. But she was thankful, she said, for many things. She was at peace with her story. Finally, I asked her why she offered me her lunch. She said simply, "Jesu ist mein Herrn. Gott ist gut." (Jesus is my Lord. God is good.) She understood and lived in the story of Jesus in a way that most sophisticated scholars could never do. Her faith touched mine. Who was it, after all, that I met that day in Vienna?" (Fairchild, *Finding Hope Again* [Harper & Row, 1980], p. 136).

She embodied what Calvin pointed to in words:

We are not our own; therefore neither reason nor our will should predominate in our deliberations and actions.

We are not our own; therefore let us not presuppose it as our end to seek what may be expedient for us according to the flesh.

We are not our own; therefore let us, as far as possible, forget ourselves and all things that are ours.

On the contrary, we are God's; To God, therefore let us live and die.

We are God's; therefore let God's wisdom and will preside in all our actions.

We are God's; toward God, therefore, as our only legitimate end, let every part of our lives be directed (*Institutes*, Book III, chapter 7, paragraph i).

# Searching for the Millennium in America

by JAMES H. MOORHEAD

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## Inaugural Address

PRESIDENT GILLESPIE, esteemed colleagues and students, honored guests, I am grateful that you have surrendered a spring afternoon to assemble here. Permit me to express also my profound appreciation for those who have preceded me in the Department of History. I think of James Hastings Nichols who as the previous occupant of the Bridge chair graced it with academic distinction and set an exacting standard for all who follow him. I remember, too, other distinguished predecessors in the field of American Church History: John Mulder and Lefferts A. Loetscher, the latter a beloved mentor in whose classes my zeal for American religious history was first awakened. To stand surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses is both encouraging and daunting.

My inaugural address is one of the last things on the calendar for the academic year 1986-87; and this lateness is altogether fitting, for I shall speak about one of the last things of Christian theology—the millennium. Or more specifically, I shall assess the role of millennialism in contemporary studies of American Church History.

In recent years, millennialism has proven to be one of the most fertile areas of investigation in American religious history. Scholars have found millennialism almost everywhere: in the Puritan sense of errand in the wilderness, in Roger Williams' theory of religious liberty, in the ideology of the United States as a Redeemer nation, and in the apocalyptic militance with which Americans have waged various wars. Millennial symbols also shaped sectarian movements such as the Shakers and Mormons, influenced abolitionism, motivated at least one prominent slave revolt in 1831, contributed to a nascent feminist consciousness, and played no small part of the emergence of

both Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism.<sup>1</sup> The catalogue of millennial loci could be extended indefinitely, and its length attests the accuracy of a commentator who remarks that "the word millennialism has become almost synonymous in recent years with American religious history."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps even this statement errs on the side of timidity, for some works of grand synthesis have portrayed millennialism as the key not only to religion but to American culture as well. For example, William G. McLoughlin argues that through successive crises Americans have reformulated their core myth, namely that national values "will perfect not only the individual and the nation but the world." "American history is thus best understood," says McLoughlin, "as a millenarian movement."<sup>3</sup> Sacvan Bercovitch likewise places millennial aspirations at the center of the American experience. He contends that the Puritan jeremiad, which was rooted in biblical typology and eschatology, has remained the chief ritual of cultural consensus long after its original theological trappings disappeared. According to Bercovitch, the co-opting power of the jeremiad has been so great that scarcely anyone has broken free of it. Rather, like persons struggling against quicksand, critics of the American Dream have only sunk more deeply into the myth of American exceptionalism and millennial mission.<sup>4</sup>

Today I want to try to put this recent research into perspective by addressing three questions: (1) What contributions has this scholarship made to the field of church history? (2) What unresolved issues do researchers yet need to address? (3) What value does this work on American millennialism offer to those of us who are engaged in the theological enterprise?

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, 1978); W. Clark Gilpin, *The Millenarian Piety of Roger Williams* (Chicago, 1979); Ernest Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, 1968); Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, 1978); James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven, 1978); Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1981); Klaus Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago, 1981); Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York, 1978); Milton C. Sernett, ed., *Afro-American Religious History: A Documentary Witness* (Durham, 1985); Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago, 1970); Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York, 1979); George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Leonard I. Sweet, ed., *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon, 1984), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Social Reform: An Essay in Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago, 1978), p. xiv.

<sup>4</sup> Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*.



*Contributions of Millennial Studies to Church History*

Perhaps the most obvious achievement of recent research is to kill off—or at least severely wound—longstanding myths about the nature of millennialism. At one time authors frequently treated the subject with thinly disguised contempt and described millenarians much as zookeepers might display the more exotic specimens in their collection. Millenarians were deemed crackpots or fools. Writers delighted in portraying their oddities, such as the ascension robes which the followers of William Miller allegedly donned while awaiting the return of Jesus in 1843-44. Persons watching for the Second Coming, said Alice Felt Tyler in her classic *Freedom's Ferment* in 1944, were "those whose piety exceeded their balance of judgment."<sup>5</sup> If not dismissed as unbalanced, millenarians were portrayed as the oppressed. Their vision of a new heaven and a new earth was a product of deprivation, and their millennialism the cry of the disinherited. But whether as lunatic fringe or the dispossessed, searchers for the millennium took a place on the margins of American religious history. They were somehow apart from the responsible mainstream of American religious history.

Recent scholarship has placed these ideas under a fairly large cloud. To be sure, the hope of the coming kingdom did produce its share of eccentrics, and that faith on occasion gave voice to the anguish of the disinherited; but millennialism cannot be explained solely in these terms. For example, the Millerites, those archetypal "crazies" of earlier histories, shared much with other Protestants. Millerite biblical exegesis, while yielding different conclusions, proceeded on assumptions shared with many who abhorred the adventist excitement. Nor were Miller's followers discernibly different from outsiders in social position. In a recent study of Millerism in New York state, one writer has demonstrated that adherents of the movement occupied a middling position in society, in fact were perhaps slightly better off than the average person.<sup>6</sup> They were not, in short, the disinherited. But the most devastating critique of interpretations relegating the millennial faith to fringe groups comes from the wide diffusion of millennial symbols. Throughout a large portion of American history, sober and respectable church people also

<sup>5</sup> Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War* (Minneapolis, 1944), p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> David Rowe, "The Millerites: A Shadow Portrait," a paper presented at "A Conference on Millerism and the Millenarian Mind in Nineteenth-Century America," at Killington, Vt., May 31-June 3, 1984; see also Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1974).

shared the hope of the Apocalypse. If the Shakers, the Millerites, and the Mormons claimed the millennial hope, so, too, did stalwarts of the religious mainstream such as Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, Lyman Beecher, and even Charles Hodge. Hodge, who professed greater diffidence about eschatology than he did about most topics, did not hesitate to predict a grand millennial future when the missionary enterprise would convert all nations, spiritual prosperity would be general, and wars would cease to the ends of the earth. Moses Stuart, who was one of the first nineteenth-century Americans to advance a truly critical study of the Apocalypse, firmly believed that Revelation 20 foretold a literal period of historical felicity for the saints.<sup>7</sup> Given the prevalence of such convictions, one may apply to America the words W. H. Oliver has written of England. Millennialism "was a normal intellectual activity." It was "a respectable way of saying things about God, man, and their relationship in society and history."<sup>8</sup> As such, millennialism was neither the faith of the unbalanced nor the cry of the dispossessed; it was rather a common cultural vocabulary through which persons could enunciate their hopes and fears for the future.

Another once powerful interpretive device has fallen under suspicion: the use of pre- and postmillennial categories. Previously historians attributed different mentalities and behaviors to those persuasions. Premillennialists, who anticipated the return of Christ before the millennium, assessed the present age negatively. This world would slide ever deeper into wickedness, and redemption would come only when the Son of Man returned on the clouds of heaven to overthrow the wicked. Accordingly, premillennialists supposedly adopted a passive stance toward all efforts to improve the world. Why should one strive for victory that could only be won at the Second Advent? At best, Christians could hope to save individual souls from a corrupt and perishing order. The often-quoted words of the late nineteenth-century evangelist Dwight L. Moody were taken as a synopsis of the premillennial attitude: "I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat, and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'"<sup>9</sup> By contrast, postmillenni-

<sup>7</sup> Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728* (New York, 1971); Jonathan Edwards, *Apocalyptic Writings*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven, 1977); Oberlin Evangelist, Dec. 6, 1843, p. 195; Marie Caskey, *Chariot of Fire: Religion and the Beecher Family* (New Haven, 1978); Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols., New York, 1872-75), III, pp. 858-59; Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse* (2 vols., Andover, 1845), I, p. 158, II, pp. 353-95.

<sup>8</sup> W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (New York, 1978), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (Chicago, 1969), p. 253.

alists, who anticipated the return of Christ after the millennium, ostensibly looked at the world in a very different way. Believing that they themselves would be the instruments for establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, they turned their energies to every good work. If premillennialism encouraged pessimism, passivity, and faith in cataclysmic solutions, its counterpart promoted optimism, activism, and confidence in progress and reform.<sup>10</sup>

The dichotomy was neat and its logic seemingly compelling, but recent historians have asked whether millennial theorists actually behaved in accordance with the paradigm. Several writers, for example, have demonstrated that before 1800 the distinctions between pre- and postmillennialism were hopelessly muddled and that commentators drew no consistent philosophy of history from either eschatology.<sup>11</sup> Historians of the nineteenth century have continued to find greater explanatory value in the distinction; but they, too, have cautioned against simplistic caricatures. One scholar, for example, has shown that postmillennialism, far from being inevitably wedded to a reformist view, was used by Southern Calvinists before the Civil War as a justification of slavery; and I have contended elsewhere that this eschatology, sometimes treated as if it were merely a religious gloss on the idea of progress, also contained elements of cataclysm and supernatural overturning—ideas usually associated with premillennialism.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, scholars have fine tuned their assessments of that latter view. Sensitive treatments of premillennialism, often written by historians close to that tradition, indicate that it did not preclude activism. Those who watched for an imminent Second Coming often supported the same evangelical and benevolent endeavors for which their postmillennial counterparts labored.<sup>13</sup> If nothing else, recent research has demonstrated the extraordinary complexity of millennial symbolism and warns against overly simple typologies which explain too much.

Scholarship in the last two decades, however, has done more than demolish facile interpretive devices. It has also used the millennial motif to transcend narrowly ecclesiastical concerns and to relate religious to secular his-

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, David E. Smith, "Millenarian Scholarship in America," *American Quarterly*, 17 (Fall 1965): 535-49; Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1957); and Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*.

<sup>11</sup> James W. Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England* (New Haven, 1977).

<sup>12</sup> Jack P. Maddex, Jr., "Proslavery Millennialism: Social Eschatology in Antebellum Southern Calvinism," *American Quarterly*, 31 (Spring 1979): 46-62; James H. Moorhead, "Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in American Religious Thought, 1800-1880," *Journal of American History*, 71 (December 1984): 524-42.

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1982*, rev. ed. (Chicago, 1987).

tory. This breadth of vision is not surprising in view of the fact that much of the research has been done by persons who are not church historians. Political scientists, secular historians, and literary scholars have all played an honorable role in the enterprise. It is largely due to their efforts that we are aware that the symbols of the Apocalypse are not only data for church history, but are also a part of the story of American secular history.

In his monumental *A Religious History of the American People*, Sydney E. Ahlstrom set forth as a first principle that "the concept of religion must be broadened to include 'secular' movements and convictions."<sup>14</sup> Recent millennial studies have exemplified that catholicity and symbolize the wide context in which American church historians now work. No longer is the discipline a segregated realm cloistered in the seminary. It is now part of a much larger examination of the religious, social, and cultural dimensions of American experience. Studies of millennialism are scarcely the cause of that change, but they are symptomatic of it. The change is one which American church historians must on the whole welcome.

### *Unresolved Questions*

But a tax has been assessed for the breadth of recent scholarship, and the price has been paid in the coin of precision. Millennialism has perhaps appeared ubiquitous because scholars have been reluctant to explain precisely what they mean by the term. In the last several years, professional journals and conferences have raised calls for greater exactness. In a recent paper before the American Historical Association, Theodore Dwight Bozeman dismissed as "sheer, wondrous moonshine" the widely accepted notion that the Puritans migrated to New England with a clear sense of millennial mission. Bozeman insists that their errand into the wilderness can be deemed millennial only if one falls into "terminological looseness" and treats every reference to biblical eschatology—for example, allusions to the Last Judgment or Second Coming—as evidence of millennialism.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Melvin Endy in a recent article has debunked the idea that large numbers of the clergy invested the American Revolution with millennial significance. Endy criticizes those who define millennialism "so broadly that it loses any necessary correlation with salvation history."<sup>16</sup> These two objections move in slightly dif-

<sup>14</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (2 vols., Garden City, 1975 [orig. ed., 1972]), I, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Dwight Bozeman, "Puritan Millennialism and the 'Errand into the Wilderness,'" paper delivered before a joint session of the American Historical Association and the American Society of Church History, December 28, 1985.

<sup>16</sup> Melvin B. Endy, Jr., "Just War, Holy War, and Millennialism in Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 42 (January 1985): 3-25.



ferent directions. While Bozeman is distressed with the blurring of discrete biblical motifs, Endy fears the confusion of millennialism with secular visions of a grand future. Yet both scholars are united in calling for a more careful marking of the boundaries of millennialism, and both appear convinced that greater precision will reduce its supposed significance. How shall we shed some light on this vexing problem?

Perhaps the beginning of wisdom is a frank acknowledgement that the problem of definition is endemic to the subject. Millennialism is but one thread in a complex theological tapestry derived from the Bible. The millennium is explicitly mentioned once in the canon, and then only briefly in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation. There it denotes the final thousand years of history, a time during which Satan is bound, and the earth enjoys unprecedented felicity. This short, evocative passage occurs within a work setting forth other themes: for example, a view of history as a pattern of crisis, judgment, and vindication and an expectation of the imminent overthrow of the current world order. Moreover, the Apocalypse makes the millennium only one goal of history and a penultimate one at that. Beyond the thousand years lie the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment, the consignment of the wicked to the lake of fire, and the joy of the redeemed in the eternal state. In short, the biblical texts from which millennialism is derived do not package eschatological themes in tidy separate wrappings.

Few American commentators on those texts have done so either. Samuel Hopkins' *Treatise on the Millennium* (1793) offers a case in point. The *Treatise*, one of the first American works to focus sustained attention on the millennium, also ranged across other eschatological themes. Hopkins insisted that a period of terrible moral declension still lay ahead and that the golden age would probably not begin until at least seventy-five years or perhaps as much as another two centuries had elapsed. Hopkins' goal, then, was not to incite visions of imminent millennial glory but rather to encourage the saints' "faith, patience, and perseverance" as they faced "the present dark appearance of things." Even after the millennium, he warned, evil would revive on a scale so massive that it could only be put down by Christ's coming "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God."<sup>17</sup> In short, Hopkins' *Treatise* was an evocation of the apocalyptic model of history—crisis, judgment, vindication—as much as it was a statement of millennial hope.

Dispensationalism, a variant of premillennialism which arose in the nineteenth century and retains a large following today, likewise illustrates the in-

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Hopkins, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins* (3 vols., Boston, 1854), II, pp. 226, 363, and *passim*.

tertwinning of various eschatological motifs. Although this eschatology offers a distinct scenario for the millennium—a restored Jewish kingdom to be preceded by the Rapture or the secret return of Christ to meet with his saints in the air—the millennium itself has often been at the periphery of attention. Since the millennium will be primarily a Jewish affair, it is of little direct concern to the Christian. Of more immediate interest is the possibility of Christ's return at any moment and the concomitant necessity of being prepared to meet him.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the hope of an imminent Rapture has beguiled several generations of American premillennialists with the thought that they might not taste death. One late nineteenth-century adherent of this eschatological persuasion expressed the hope somewhat poignantly:

Caught up to meet the Lord  
 With sweep of angel wing,  
 No winding sheet for me, or house of sod!  
 O death, where is thy sting?<sup>19</sup>

A recent dispensationalist has stated the hope more prosaically. Expounding on the practical implications of the Rapture, the Reverend Jerry Falwell declared in a television sermon: "This may hurt the cemetery business, but I don't own a plot."<sup>20</sup> Ironically, in dispensationalism, this most indisputably millennial of schemes, the vision of a thousand years of bliss, is overshadowed—or at least matched—by other eschatological themes, such as the personal transcendence of death.

If millennialism often tends to blend into other biblical motifs, the precise boundary line between it and more secular visions of future grandeur can likewise be difficult to fix. In 1853, a writer in a Methodist theological magazine depicted a glorious future, predicated in part on the fact that the nineteenth century was "an age of steam, of electricity, [of] greatest and most wonderful invention."<sup>21</sup> Shall the scholar call this hope millennial? George Bancroft, the great nineteenth-century historian, presents a similarly difficult case. Although his *History of the United States from a Discovery of the American Continent* (1837-74) offers no specific biblical eschatology, the work is constructed in such a way that historical contingencies testify to providential design. From the time of colonization, the hand of God was visible in the

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*.

<sup>19</sup> Ernest B. Gordon, *Adoniram Judson Gordon* (New York, 1896), p. 321.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Charles Krauthammer, "The End of the World," *The New Republic* (March 28, 1983), p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> "The Signs of the Times," *Methodist Quarterly Review* 35 (1853): 427.

march of events toward liberty and democracy. Can one then say, as a recent historian has done, that this son of New England's religious culture was writing a millennial history of the American republic?<sup>22</sup>

Much recent research has turned on such questions and has assumed that at some point millennialism was transposed into a more secular version of hope. Sacvan Bercovitch has located the origins of that transformation at the beginning of Massachusetts Bay Colony. He contends that the New England Puritans, through a novel use of typology, fused secular and sacred events to a degree unknown in previous European theology and thereby placed America at the center of salvation history. Then, the crucial step already having been taken, millennial imagery was gradually translated "from its meaning within the closed system of sacred history into a metaphor for limitless secular improvement."<sup>23</sup> Nathan Hatch has suggested that the years surrounding the French and Indian War marked a crucial transition, for the New England clergy responded to the conflict by infusing the millennial hope with ideals of political liberty borrowed from the radical Whig tradition.<sup>24</sup> In two different works, I have argued for a significant transformation of millennialism in the late nineteenth century. During the Civil War, Yankee Protestants confused the progress of the Kingdom with the triumphs of the Northern army; and in the Gilded Age, one variant of millennialism gradually withered away. What remained was rather like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire cat, faith in moral and social improvement constituting the residual grin.<sup>25</sup> Though scholars have not always agreed on the times and seasons of transformation, the idea of the secularization of millennialism has been a mainstay of much recent research. It is probably not accidental that so many historians have dealt with this problem, and one might even say that millennial modes of thought tend to promote their own secularization. In whatever form, millennialism looks toward an ultimate merger of the secular and the sacred, for it envisions a time when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord" (Rev. 11:15).

The difficulty of defining and assessing millennialism is compounded by the fact that it exists in both systematic and allusive forms. Some works of exegesis set forth scenarios in which apocalyptic symbols such as the vials of wrath, the Dragon, and the millennium are explicated and ordered in tem-

<sup>22</sup> Dorothy Ross, "Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Historical Review* 89 (October 1984): 915.

<sup>23</sup> Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>24</sup> Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty*.

<sup>25</sup> Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*; and James H. Moorhead, "The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865-1925," *Church History* 53 (March 1984): 61-77.

poral sequence. Other works merely allude in passing to these motifs. The historian's problem is that the former treatises often confine themselves to historical generalizations and say relatively little about specific social, political, and religious issues. By contrast, the literature which might be denominated allusively millennial does frequently comment upon immediate issues, but the rather haphazard way in which rhetorical flourishes from the apocalypse are introduced makes it difficult to know what specific millennial vision—if any—lies behind the writer's pronouncements.<sup>26</sup> How then is the historian to know the extent to which these latter writers were moved by a consistent millennialism?

The debated question of New England's alleged millennial errand illustrates the difficulty of making this determination. The documents from the first years of settlement contain tantalizing hints and suggestive remarks, but little more. Thus when John Winthrop wrote in 1629, a year before his departure to Massachusetts, a justification for the colonial venture, he articulated no clear millennial rationale. He defended the colonial venture on largely pragmatic grounds, and at no point in his reflections did he call upon people to colonize New England because they would thereby inaugurate the latter-day glory. Yet in passing, Winthrop noted that settlement in the Bay Colony might "help on the coming of the fullness of the Gentiles, and to raise up a bulwark against the kingdom of Antichrist." Moreover, evil times loomed for European churches, "and who knows, but that God hath provided this place to be a refuge for many whom he means to save out of the general calamity, and seeing the church hath no place left to fly into but the wilderness, what better work can there be than to go and provide food and tabernacles for her."<sup>27</sup> These allusions to apocalyptic eschatology—the Antichrist, the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles, and the flight of the church into the wilderness, the latter probably patterned on Revelation 12:13-14—hinted that the Puritan errand in New England *might* be a forerunner of millennial glory, but precisely what Winthrop intended remains vague. Perhaps he himself was unclear.

A similar problem confronts the scholar who wishes to assess the millennial significance attributed by contemporaries to the American Revolution. One of the works often cited as evidence is Ezra Stiles' "The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor," preached before the General Assembly of

<sup>26</sup> For a sensitive analysis of this issue, see Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 119-49.

<sup>27</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, ed., *The Founding of Massachusetts* (Indianapolis, 1964), p. 175. I have modernized the spelling.



Connecticut in 1783 shortly after Great Britain had signed the peace treaty recognizing the independence of America. Without question, Stiles' sermon intimated a grand future for the United States on the stage of world history and that destiny was depicted in millennial symbols. Yet the author was reluctant to assert unequivocally that America would have a millennial role. Stiles illustrated his reticence in the way in which he handled his text—the promise of Moses to Israel (Deut. 26:19) that God would raise it “high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.” While Stiles' believed the prophecy was relevant to America, he disclaimed any intention to find its literal fulfillment in the United States. The “primary sense” of this prediction, he explained, was that the Jewish people would be gathered and converted to Christianity in the millennial era. At most, the prediction was, in Stiles' own words, only “allusively prophetick of the future prosperity and splendor of the United States.”<sup>28</sup>

How, then, is one to interpret such “allusively prophetick” language? The answer turns in large measure upon the weight which the historian places upon unsystematic hints and intimations. If these are regarded as evidence of deeper (though perhaps formally unarticulated) commitments, then they constitute compelling evidence of a millennial vision. On the other hand, if one deems them metaphorical adornment, they may be dismissed as inconsequential.

Two fine studies of eighteenth-century millennialism illustrate the results of choosing one answer over the other. Near the beginning of his study of millennial thought in the Revolutionary era, Nathan Hatch makes the following methodological observation:

Because my aim has been to understand the interwoven set of values by which ministers in general ordered reality, I have given less attention to formal treatises, either political or theological. Far more instructive in deciphering the clergy's taken-for-granted assumptions has been the vast array of fast, thanksgiving, anniversary, election, militia, and week-to-week sermons that issued from printing presses throughout New England. In these less guarded commentaries on political events, clergymen were likely to express their most compelling hopes and fears. Their oblique references to Antichrist or the millennium, for example, provide a much better gauge of social thought than the works that detailed eschatology in systematic coherence. . . . Under this kind of anal-

<sup>28</sup> Stiles' sermon is excerpted in Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, 1971), pp. 82-92.

ysis, a flurry of isolated, off-the-cuff, and individually incomprehensible remarks begin to coalesce and take shape. We are thus able to discern the ideology by which these men characterized and legitimated their experience.<sup>29</sup>

Given Hatch's methodological commitment, it is little wonder that he finds a significant role for millennialism in the political thought of the Revolutionary era. By contrast, James W. Davidson, surveying the same epoch, reaches a different conclusion. He writes of an anonymous Revolutionary pamphlet which used the imagery of the Apocalypse:

Clearly the Sons of Liberty were roused by such stirring words, but it was the rhetoric more than the substance of the Revelation which the anonymous orator found useful. His interpretations were ingenious but hardly serious extrapolations from existing authorities. . . . And while the speech capitalized on eschatological imagery, it was not concerned with putting current events into any continuum of history, culminating in either Armageddon or the millennium. The piece was effective rhetoric, pure and simple. . . .<sup>30</sup>

Thus Davidson, regarding these allusions as "rhetoric, pure and simple," finds little evidence that millennialism played a major role in shaping the ideology of liberty and independence.

In order to gain a handle on these interpretive difficulties, American historians need to do two things: First, we need to analyze far more clearly than we have previously the nature of eschatological language. What is it that men and women are doing when they speak of the Second Coming, the millennium, or the antichrist? Second, we need to establish a tighter, more restrictive definition of millennialism.

First the nature of eschatological language: the symbols of the last things are multivalent. Because they are simultaneously canonical and obscure, they have provided an authoritative language through which diverse and changing meanings may be expressed. Even those millennialists espousing seemingly rigid schemes often appear, on close examination, to be more flexible than their prophetic timetables would suggest. One catches a glimpse of this dynamic in the work of Josiah Litch, a Methodist minister who converted to the doctrines of William Miller in 1838. Like many of his coreligionists, Litch offered a specific scenario of prophetic events to occur in his own time;

<sup>29</sup> Hatch, *Sacred Cause of Liberty*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>30</sup> Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought*, p. 238.

but he also cautioned that this timetable was not the whole of the Adventist creed. The burden of the Millerites' message, Litch explained, was that the world had "approached a crisis"; thus, he insisted, "no disappointment respecting a definite point of time can move them, or drive them from their position. . . ." <sup>31</sup> If, then, specific predictions did not materialize—and Fitch's did not—prophecy was not abandoned. It was reinterpreted. Contrary to the title of an influential book, prophecy seldom fails—at least for those who believe in it. <sup>32</sup> Its enigmatic symbols are instead subjected to a continuous process of reevaluation in light of changing circumstances.

If this analysis is correct and the symbols of the Last Things are highly tensile, then historians of eschatology must be wary of relying solely upon systematic treatises which provide elaborate prophetic chronologies. Nathan Hatch is correct that "oblique references" and "off-the-cuff" allusions in weekly sermons, diaries, or the religious press may be better guides to persons' working eschatologies than more formal treatises. In these unsystematic works, we are more likely to discover how the plastic symbols of prophecy were actually functioning.

We also need a definition of millennialism—if only a provisional one—to help us make sense out of the bewildering array of data. A possible candidate would be the definition one historian has recently proposed: namely, that millennialism denotes belief in "a future, collective, imminent transformation of life on earth through a supernatural agency." <sup>33</sup> This usage, common in much sociological and anthropological research, has the merit of considerable specificity. Unlike expansive treatments which absorb virtually every vaguely eschatological reference into millennialism, this definition is tight enough to permit meaningful discriminations. It also facilitates comparative studies with non-Christian movements since it avoids distinctively Christian theological categories. Yet despite its value, this delimitation of millennialism has serious drawbacks when applied to the American scene, and would undo many of the gains of recent research. While certain groups clearly fall within its purview—the Jehovah's Witnesses come immediately to mind—many Americans who have styled themselves believers in the millennium are

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Eric Anderson, "Signs of the Times: The Millerite Interpretation of Prophecy," paper presented at "A Conference on Millerism and the Millenarian Mind in Nineteenth-Century America."

<sup>32</sup> Leon Festinger *et al.*, *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World* (New York, 1964 [orig. ed., 1956]).

<sup>33</sup> Bozeman, "Puritan Millennialism." For similar definitions, see Sylvia Thrupp, ed., *Millennial Dreams in Action: Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements* (The Hague, 1962), pp. 31-43; Bryan R. Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples* (New York, 1973).

excluded by the definition. For example, Samuel Hopkins' treatise on the millennium did not look for an imminent establishment of the Kingdom of God, but placed its coming years in the future. Nor have all millennialists drawn a sharp distinction between supernatural and natural agencies as the means of the millennium's inauguration. For those who believe that all history—the natural as well as the supernatural—is under the control of God, that distinction may be unimportant. Moreover, many nineteenth-century postmillennialists spoke of a Kingdom of God which would be not so much a totally new era as it would be a perfection and extension of trends already under way within history.<sup>34</sup> The definition we are considering is perhaps most useful in the examination of various sectarian movements, but it does not do justice to forms of millennial thought appearing elsewhere in American religion.

An alternate and more promising definition would take its cue from Melvin Endy's complaint against those who treat millennialism "so broadly that it loses any necessary correlation with salvation history." The church historian might restrict the term "millennial" to those who invoke, either systematically or by obvious allusion, the biblical vision of a final golden age within history. This definition would permit the inclusion of the full range of persons regarding themselves as believers in the millennium; but it would prevent every eschatological theme from being subsumed under the rubric of millennialism, and it would exclude visions of the future which make no reference to biblical symbolism.

But I must emphasize that the establishment of a more restrictive usage of the term will not of itself represent much gain if it promotes academic tunnel vision. The purpose of precise definition should *not* be to encourage ever narrower monographs dealing only with simon-pure millennialism. Indeed we must hope for an opposite result. Reminded that millennialism is only one part of a very complex symbolism, we might then devote more attention to the larger patterns of eschatology (including secular derivations) and attempt to sort out its themes, and to search for their connections. To date, useful discriminations have been obscured by tossing the blanket term "millennialism" over complex eschatological themes.

For example, we still know relatively little about the ways in which millennial visions of corporate destiny interacted with the hopes for individuals' futures. Several authors have suggested that the apocalyptic model of history—the pattern of crisis, judgment, and vindication—mirrored the evan-

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, my "Between Progress and Apocalypse."



gical conception of the individual soul's pilgrimage from sin, through the storm of conversion, to new life.<sup>35</sup> Timothy L. Smith has suggested a correspondence between the reformist millennialism of the antebellum period and holiness doctrines that individuals might attain perfection.<sup>36</sup> These hints must be pursued more systematically. In no area is the need for such research more apparent than in the nexus of millennialism with the other "last things" of the Christian tradition: death, heaven, hell, and the Last Judgment. As we have seen, the biblical texts from which millennialism is derived twine these themes together; and so, too, have American commentators. Treatises on the millennium regularly warned individuals to flee the wrath of hell, enticed them with the joys of heaven, and spoke as if the individual's death were virtually coterminous with the Last Judgment.<sup>37</sup> To portray millennial thought without asking how its adherents viewed death and afterlife—without inquiring into their dreams of heaven and their nightmares of hell—is to create an incomplete picture of the hopes and fears animating them. Yet in the last two decades the burgeoning scholarly literature on millennialism and the growing corpus on attitudes toward death and afterlife have seldom intersected.<sup>38</sup>

In view of the fact that biblical versions of the last things have often tended to blur into profane visions of the future, historians might also profitably take another look at this issue. In particular, we need to ask why a distinct biblically grounded millennialism, so common among nineteenth-century Protestants of all persuasions, largely vanished in moderate to liberal sectors by the second third of the twentieth century. Since then, the Book of Revelation has become the peculiar property of conservative Protestants. As suggested earlier, millennial symbols once constituted a common vocabulary through which men and women enunciated their hopes and fears. That vocabulary made possible a genuine discourse, even among those who disagreed violently. In libraries, gathering dust, are countless old volumes testifying to this fact: Millerite and anti-Millerite tracts, pre- and postmillennial polemics,

<sup>35</sup> Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought*, pp. 122-75; Jerald C. Brauer, "Revivalism and Millenarianism in America," in *In the Great Tradition: In Honor of Winthrop S. Hudson*, ed. Joseph D. Ban and Paul R. Dekar (Valley Forge, 1982), pp. 147-59.

<sup>36</sup> Smith, "Righteousness and Hope."

<sup>37</sup> For one nineteenth-century example, see John Dowling, *An Exposition of the Prophecies* (Providence, 1840), pp. 162-63, 165.

<sup>38</sup> The literature on death and views of afterlife includes such works as David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death* (New York, 1977); Stannard, ed., *Death in America* (Philadelphia, 1975); James J. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia, 1980); and R. Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture* (New York, 1977).

all attempting to grapple with each others' arguments within at least a partially shared frame of reference. But today's millenarians are likely to meet silence or total incomprehension from other Christians to whom that hope sounds like a foreign tongue. How and why the common language of Christian hope was lost is a subject which merits close historical study.<sup>39</sup>

The foregoing issues scarcely represent a complete list of unresolved questions. They are offered instead as illustrative of the considerable work which students of eschatological symbolism in America have yet to undertake.

### *Theological Implications*

That work has profound implications for the theological enterprise, for millennial and apocalyptic symbolism are far from moribund in contemporary culture. In the 1970s the bestselling book in the category of non-fiction—though some may dispute this classification—was Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*. That work is a slick, popularized version of dispensationalism. The book predicts an imminent Rapture and an upward spiral of wickedness and international tension culminating in nuclear conflagration. This pattern is a predetermined one which no person can stop, but the impending disaster should occasion no alarm. At the height of human folly and catastrophe, Jesus will return to establish his millennial kingdom. A strikingly different kind of apocalyptic vision is current among secular intellectuals, and Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* is perhaps its best representative. Though written from an avowedly secular standpoint, Schell's volume, too, is an eschatological tract, occasionally interspersing its warnings against nuclear holocaust with metaphors of destruction derived from the Apocalypse. But unlike traditional visions of the terrors of the End, Schell's Armageddon, should it occur, would not be the prelude to a cosmic rebirth. "... Extinction by nuclear arms," writes Schell, "would not be the Day of Judgment, in which God destroys the world but raises the dead and then metes out perfect justice to everyone who ever lived; it would be the utterly meaningless and completely unjust destruction of [humankind] by [human beings]." Unlike Lindsey who takes comfort in a foreordained plan and in a pattern of meaning transcending human purpose, Schell sees humans as the arbiters of their destiny and the sole determiners of meaning. "[Humanity] is to be thought of not as something that possesses a certain worth . . . but as the inexhaustible source of all the possible forms of worth, which has no

<sup>39</sup> For further reflections on this issue, see my "Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought."

existence or meaning without human life.”<sup>40</sup> Thus for Schell, a nuclear Armageddon would be infinitely more terrifying than the traditional Day of Doom foretold by Christian prophets. It would be an anti-Apocalypse negating all meaning.

Surveying these contemporary permutations of eschatology, the political scientist Michael Barkun calls them evidence of a “divided apocalypse.”<sup>41</sup> His description is apt—and disturbing. The most vocal claimants to the apocalyptic tradition have sundered it into incomplete pieces. One party maintains the transcendent meaning of history but at the cost of a fatalism which views unprecedented destruction with detached equanimity. The other rightly asserts the responsibility of humankind for its destiny, but its thoroughly secular outlook sacrifices the emphasis upon God’s overarching purpose.

We who are assembled here today no doubt view these eschatologies as dangerously one-sided appropriations of the biblical tradition. But how are our voices to be raised in witness to a more adequate eschatology? Do we even know what such an eschatology might be? Despite the academic flirtations with theologies of hope and liberation, alternative visions of the future have not been set forth in a fashion to command attention in the American churches. The Lindseys and the Schells have dominated popular discourse. No theological task is more urgent than a fresh, compelling, and balanced proclamation of eschatology. But American theologians cannot undertake this task without understanding the long and complex history of the symbols of Christian hope. Thus the effort to sort out the ways that millennialism, the Second Coming, or visions of heaven and hell shaped the faith of our ancestors is far more than an exercise in religious antiquarianism. It is a necessary introduction to a theological task of immense significance.

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York, 1982), pp. 127, 129.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Barkun, “Divided Apocalypse: Thinking About the End in Contemporary America,” *Soundings*, 66 (Fall 1983): 257-80.

# Of Ships and Books: The Travel Journals of the Early Princeton Seminary Foreign Missionaries

by DAVID B. CALHOUN

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## Princetoniana

DURING THE FIRST HALF of the nineteenth century, steamboats were traveling the great American rivers and venturing precariously into ocean waters. But these were still the years of the sailing ships, and by mid-century the legendary "clipper" was king. In 1849 the *Sea Witch*, one of the fastest and most beautiful of all the clippers, established an all-time record of seventy-four days and fourteen hours from China to New York. Most of the ships, however, that linked the United States and foreign lands were neither so large nor so fast. These little ships, known as "regular traders" (the word "regular" applying to the destination of the vessel, but not to the time of her departure or arrival), carried mail and cargo and a few passengers. Not infrequently those passengers included Christian missionaries. When former Princeton Seminary student John Lloyd embarked for China in 1844, all but two of the ship's passengers were missionaries. Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson and his wife were the only passengers on the clipper ship *David Brown* bound for Singapore in 1858.

In 1812 the first American foreign missionaries left home in obedience to Christ's "last command" to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. That same year the new Presbyterian seminary at Princeton opened its doors. In his charge to the one professor and the three students, New York minister Philip Milledoler expressed the hope that one day students from the seminary would carry "the lamp of eternal truth" and plant "the standard of the cross on the remotest shores of heathen lands."<sup>1</sup>

In 1814 the Princeton students, inspired by the example of the students at Andover Seminary, organized "The Society of Inquiry on Missions." Thus began a forty-five-year pattern of Society of Inquiry meetings on the first day

<sup>1</sup> *Inauguration of the Rev. Archibald Alexander*, p. 117.



of each month when the seminary was in session.<sup>2</sup> During these years a small but steady stream of members of the Society of Inquiry left the United States in order to spend the rest of their lives in unknown and strange places as missionaries. Their journals, diaries, and letters provide a vivid picture of their long voyages to these distant lands.<sup>3</sup>

The *Manual for Missionaries* of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church prepared the students for the difficulty of leaving home: "All who have been called to take up this cross know its bitterness. . . . On the one hand is the glory of God, and the good of men, on the other the parting from the most endeared relatives and friends."<sup>4</sup> Aboard ship for China, John Lloyd mused in his journal about "sweet scenes of home never again to be enjoyed." Ashbel Green Simonton wrote as he sailed for Rio de Janeiro on June 18, 1859: "I am alone. Now I taste for the first time the reality of which I have had many painful anticipations." The sacrifice, however, as Joseph Owen noted in his journal in 1840, was "for Jesus' sake." Samuel Kellogg expressed the shared conviction of these early missionaries when he wrote in 1865 that we could "never regret what we have done, because we believe Christ has sent us."

These early missionaries faced many days at sea before reaching their destinations.<sup>5</sup> It took Walter Lowrie 129 days aboard the ship *Huntress* to reach China in 1842. Levi Janier spent four months on the *Washington* enroute to India in 1841 and 1842. Joseph Owen, John Rankin, and William McAuley traveled together on the *Eugene* in 1840. It took them 137 days from Boston to India. Samuel Dodd spent 101 days at sea aboard the *Kathay* in 1861. Samuel Kellogg was 148 days reaching India in 1864 and 1865. A few days out a furious storm washed the captain overboard. The officer next in command proved to be incompetent and took the ship hundreds of miles out of the way. Kellogg's scientific and mathematical studies at the College of New Jersey enabled him to assist in bringing the ship safely to port.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of this society and an account of the missionary history of Princeton Seminary, see David B. Calhoun, "The Last Command: Princeton Theological Seminary and Missions (1812-1862)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> These manuscripts are located in Speer Library of Princeton Theological Seminary. For bibliographical notes, see Calhoun, "The Last Command," pp. 498-500 and 538, 539.

<sup>4</sup> *A Manual for the Use of Missionaries and Missionary Candidates in Connection with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church* (New York: John Westfall and Company), p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> During the early days of their voyages the missionaries not only experienced homesickness but also seasickness. On his way to India in 1841 Levi Janvier found seasickness quite equal to his "utmost anticipations." In 1861 Samuel Dodd "made frequent application" to a bottle of whiskey given him for seasickness. He concluded that seasickness and whiskey would cure any alcoholic!

The sights and experiences of life on the sea were often turned into spiritual lessons. Joseph Owen saw a whale and read Psalm 104:25, 26 with new interest—"So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein." Walter Lowrie was impressed by new illustrations of God's wisdom and power and wrote that "an undevout astronomer is mad, but surely a careless sailor is worse." When a furious storm threatened Samuel Kellogg's ship in December 1864, he noted the words of Psalm 107:25, 26—"For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble." Walter Lowrie wrote to his mother in 1842: "If Christians were half as anxious to obtain the influences of the Spirit, as sailors are to catch the breeze, what a different appearance the Church would have." Samuel Dodd saw "much propriety in comparing life to a voyage," and Joseph Owen was impressed that indeed "the wicked are like the troubled sea." Walter Lowrie ended his travel journal with the words: "What a blessed place heaven will be, where 'there is no more sea!' No more storms; no more wearisome calms; no treacherous shoals; no disappointments."

The missionaries aboard ship organized religious services and witnessed to their fellow travelers and to the crew. Samuel Dodd wrote in his travel diary: "May God give us, as he did the first Christian missionary of whom we read, 'the souls of those who sail with us.' " Their zeal—and even their presence on the ship—sometimes produced tension. Some sailors thought that it was unlucky to have missionaries on board. When possible, one of the officers of the mission discussed the matter of "religious exercises" with the captain before the ship sailed; otherwise one of the missionary company was appointed by the others to request this favor.

Usually the Princetonians were allowed to conduct Sunday services and to teach Bible classes. Levi Janvier's first sermon to the crew of the *Washington* on October 3, 1841, was on the text, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." The captain of the *Banshee* refused to allow Ashbel Green Simonton to conduct Sunday services but later permitted a Bible class for the sailors. Simonton wrote: "All were present except the man at the wheel and the cook who was grinding coffee for supper. It was a full congress of nations. There were represented England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Norway, Africa, and America. There were all ages, from a boy of fourteen with his piping voice to the weather-beaten old tar of more than sixty."

The students spent time talking with the crew and giving them books to read. When several sailors professed conversion through Joseph Owen's ef-

forts, he began a Bible class on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and visited them twice daily. James Mackey, who sailed for Africa in 1849, reported that the crew welcomed good books and read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* over and over.

Often the Bible classes included other passengers and sometimes fellow missionaries from other denominations. Samuel Kellogg noted in his journal in 1865 that there was a "splendid Bible class on ship." He added that "we differ so widely on many things that the Bible is well sifted." The objections of the Arminians to the "doctrines of grace" troubled him. "On unessential things I am easy," he wrote, "but these things lie too closely to the nature of the cross for me to hear them assailed with indifference."

The missionaries regularly observed the monthly Concert of Prayer for Missions during their long voyages to foreign lands. This service, which challenged, united, and instructed American Protestants in their missionary responsibility, was an important part of student life at Princeton Seminary. It was at these meetings that the beloved Archibald Alexander "poured out his stores of information" on foreign mission.<sup>6</sup> On board ship bound for China, Walter Lowrie wrote in his journal: "It was Monthly Concert evening, and I thought of the many Monthly Concerts I had attended—of the last one, and of the work before me."

Many hours of the tedious voyages were spent in reading and study. In addition to mattresses, sheets, pillows, blankets, towels, medicines, and furniture, the students took their books with them. The Society of Inquiry wrote regularly to missionaries with a series of questions on missionary preparation and strategy. One question the students asked was how to pack their books in such a way that they would not be damaged "by chafing from the motion of the vessel."

The Princetonians took with them their favorite writers. The English Puritans were well represented: John Owen, Stephen Charnock, John Bunyan, and John Flavel. Flavel, Archibald Alexander's favorite author, was especially treasured by the Princeton missionaries. When all of Walter Lowrie's possessions were lost in a shipwreck off the China coast in 1842, he wrote that his greatest loss was "a volume of Flavel" which he prized "about its weight in gold." Among the Scottish Presbyterians, Samuel Rutherford's *Letters* and Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in Its Fourfold Estate* were favorites.

Of American writers, the students valued most Jonathan Edwards and their own "venerable professors" at Princeton. Archibald Alexander's

<sup>6</sup> James W. Alexander, *The Life of Archibald Alexander* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1854), p. 528.

*Thoughts on Religious Experience*, Charles Hodge's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, and J. A. Alexander's commentaries on the Psalms and Isaiah—along with copies of the *Biblical Repertory*—went with them to foreign lands.

The students had studied Hebrew and Greek at the seminary, and aboard ship they reviewed these languages in order to be better prepared to translate the Bible into Bantu-Benga, Armenian, Hawaiian, Hindi, Urdu, Siamese, Cantonese, Tamil, Pushtoo, Spanish, and other languages where they served.

Joseph Owen's travel journal records his study during his voyage to India in 1840. He read Stephen Charnock, Robert Leighton, and John Flavel and studied history, theology, and poetry in addition to numerous languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Persian, Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldee. Levi Janvier's journal of 1841 indicates that he read John Owen, John Flavel, Thomas Boston, Charles Hodge's commentary on Romans—and taught Hebrew to his wife, Hannah. During his long voyage to China, Walter Lowrie read Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans* and Robert Pollock's *Tales of the Covenanters* in addition to other study. John Nevius and his wife "read, studied, and sang" their way to China in 1854. "Our reading," he wrote, "was of the most serious and solid kind." Samuel Kellogg studied Greek and Hebrew, mathematics, astronomy, and navigation.

Aboard ship the students often turned to the journals of David Brainerd and Henry Martyn. Walter Lowrie, who during his 1842 voyage read again Henry Martyn's journal, showed great ability as a linguist and missionary in China. His work ended abruptly in 1847 when pirates seized a boat in which he was traveling. As he was being cast overboard to his death, he threw the Bible he was reading upon the deck. Lowrie's *Memoirs* soon took its place beside Brainerd's *Life* and Martyn's *Journals* as classics of missionary devotion. Robert Hamill Nassau, who sailed for Africa in 1861 on the *Ocean Eagle*, read Lowrie's *Memoirs* and found it "the most interesting biography" he had ever read.

By 1862, the fiftieth anniversary of Princeton Seminary, 117 students had served on foreign mission fields—from Turkey to the Sandwich Islands, from Brazil to Afghanistan, from West Africa to Northern China. In the words of John C. Lowrie, the Princeton missionaries "preached the gospel in many tongues. They taught the children, translated the Scriptures, prepared Christian books, trained up native ministers. The lessons learned . . . [at Princeton] were retaught in Africa, China, and the Isles of the Sea."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> John C. Lowrie, *Princeton Theological Seminary and Foreign Missions, a paper read at the Meeting of the Alumni*, May 25, 1876 (Philadelphia, 1876), p. 12.



# Martin Luther King, Jr.: Challenge to the Church

by M. WILLIAM HOWARD, JR.

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IN JANUARY 1986 the nation began observing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as an official holiday. The recognition of the life and work of Dr. King is, of course, an historic achievement for a number of reasons, and it is the culmination of several years of work by lots of people who collected petitions and marched and lobbied members of Congress.

My ten-year-old son and I went to Atlanta to be part of the big celebration. It was a moment I did not want him to miss; I thought this was another way for me to assist him in getting in touch with the King legacy, something he knew only through conversations, reading, and television. Yet even as we travelled to Atlanta in the airplane, I worried about what all the celebration and concentration on King would mean. After all, the federal government's official Commission had an important role in determining how the nation and the world would remember Martin. This was the same federal government which had gone to great lengths to spy on him, and to erode his effectiveness by planting derogatory stories in the news media (see *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, by David Garrow).

How could we expect that government, now in the hands of a president who had been openly hostile to King's objectives when he was alive, to oversee with integrity a celebration in honor of so much of King's still-contested achievements? This is a question not only for the government, but for all the forces of the status quo in our society. There is the continuing temptation, for those who have the capacity to shape public opinion about King, to focus upon those aspects of his work which are the least threatening to their interests. Martin was anything but a man for the status quo, because to accept things as they were would have been to accept injustice and human suffering for too many in our country and in other parts of the world.

So the recognition of Dr. King has its opportunities and its potential liabilities. It affords more and more people the chance to know and to follow



the example of one of the most important leaders which the United States has produced, while at the same time leaving his life open for reinterpretation by the very elements in the society which perceived him as their opponent, especially toward the end of his life.

Clearly, the situation I am describing puts great responsibility on those who identify with his work—upon those who marched with him, who supported him, who saw his movement as their movement—it is really these persons who will serve as a corrective to the distorted picture of King which is shown on our television screens every January, which we are invited to believe (but which I hope we will never ever accept). While most of us are not television producers or publishers or controllers of other powerful media, we must not belittle our capacity to keep the true King alive.

Martin's influence spread far broader and touched much deeper than the Christian church, of course. So many of the keepers of the dream will not be church people. Experience tells us, in fact, that some of the most faithful will not be church people. We get one glimpse of the church in King's day from his "Letter from the Birmingham City Jail." It is through this letter, which was written to what King called "moderate" religious leaders, that we can see some of the challenges to the church. From that letter we can see that the church, or church leaders, are hardly more reliable custodians of the King legacy than is the federal government.

In spite of the shortcomings of the institutional church, however, I insist that the church of Christ must shoulder some special responsibilities for the living memory of Martin's witness. While the nation and the world may recall him primarily as a social reformer—and as a person parochially concerned with advancing the lot of African-American people—it is you and I, church people, who must remind ourselves and others that Martin Luther King was, first and foremost, a minister of the gospel, a preacher. All that he did was done, not as a social activist or a politician, but as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. We must plumb the depths of the theological convictions which led Martin Luther King to commit himself to the service of others, even to the point of self-sacrifice. If the church does not explore this dimension of Martin's life, which as we know is so central to the life of Jesus, we can hardly expect labor unions or political parties or cultural groups or educators or any other group to do it.

Furthermore, examining King's theological convictions is not an academic exercise. Rather, I believe it is through understanding and emulating his own example that we can come closer to living the faithful life today in our own context. Martin Luther King, Jr., was not a fringe Christian. His

witness was at the very core of what it means to follow Jesus. He took seriously the call to "take up his cross."

## I

When we talk about the church, we talk about a multi-dimensional, complex phenomenon. I have always thought this, but now I can say from much experience in the ecumenical movement that churches are very difficult to characterize. However, the one thing they claim to have in common is the love and grace which is given to us in Christ. One can rightly say, too, that there are so many different understandings and emphases which different groups place on the call to discipleship.

In our society, where there are so many different religious expressions and institutions, we face this reality quite concretely. There are sometimes very different religious perspectives within a single family.

One way of dealing with this kind of religious diversity, that is, one way we can minimize the damage which such diverse religious views can have on the fabric of the community, is to treat religion as a severely private matter. You can believe what you want, as long as you keep it to yourself.

This is the view held by many who are troubled by the infusion of overtly religious dogma into the U.S. political scene. Still others find the involvement of religious personalities and organizations acceptable, as long as they remain within the limitations of law governing religious groups and political activity. I am rather excited about this debate. Discussion of the function of religious institutions and values is a very healthy debate, as long as it remains civil. During my term of service as National Council of Churches President, there was great concern about the opposition to the NCC by right-wing clergy and laypersons. However, I was much more concerned about the fact that so few members of NCC-related churches even knew about the NCC. I shall long remember my experience in Cleveland, just after the 30th anniversary celebration of the National Council of Churches founding. I was sitting next to a gentleman who was reading that day's edition of the *Plain Dealer*, which reported on the previous evening's anniversary activities. He seemed quite interested in the article, so I introduced myself and found that he was a businessman, active in his local church. Accompanying the article were two photographs, one of Ed Espy, past General Secretary of the NCC, and the other of Carl McIntyre, well known in ecumenical circles as a predictable critic of the NCC—even at its founding meeting in 1950.

My seatmate noticed that I was amused when looking down at the pictures of the two men. Their faces didn't seem to ring a bell with him. He

wouldn't have recognized that the names under the two pictures were switched!

I knew what a joke this would be to my fellow "ecumeniacs," but I couldn't help but think of all the people who were supportive of our churches, but who would not get the joke upon seeing the picture.

This is true partially because, in an effort to be sensitive to the wide diversity of religious belief, and because we have become more and more confused about the role of faith in public, faith in society has become virtually invisible. While I don't think there are any citizens in the country who are more dedicated to religious liberty and religious tolerance than I, I also believe that religious faith must have some implications for society, or it loses the very heart of its meaning to the person.

All that to say I am happy that religion is being debated again. Let us hope, though, that some of us in the churches will take an active role in determining the content and the direction of the debate. We are invited to accept, for example, that faith is entirely personal and pastoral; that once the individual's soul is right with God, this is the great achievement of faith.

At certain points in recent history, some church people, having been caught up in the spirit of the times and having become somewhat impatient with that aspect of the church's life which seemed resigned to the status quo, have virtually abandoned the personal and pastoral dimensions of the Faith. We concentrated only on the social and systemic—change aspects of the faith. We alienated some who had yet to begin applying their faith to the economic, social, and political arrangements in society. Just as revealing, we more often looked to the social sciences for the basic answers we were seeking, rather than to the words of Jesus and the pioneers of the early church.

Without meaning to be simplistic, let me say that what this experience has wrought is a *spiritual fatigue* and a *shallow and dwindling resolve* to continue "bearing the cross" of the faithful. We have become tired and laden down by the convincing evidence that the way of the faithless is more practical. Somehow we have lost the wings of faith, the wings that will allow us to soar in the face of all the fabricated evidence that God is not on the throne. We have forgotten what Martin believed and taught: "... that the Master's burden is light precisely when we take his yoke upon us."

## II

There is little doubt that history will write a long chapter about King as a social reformer. But you and I must write about and preach about his contribution, and that of those who were inspired by him, toward the renewal

of the Church of Christ in the United States. That was the major significance of King that many in the churches were taking seriously. Church renewal, rooted in New Testament faith, remains a great need in our society. And King's sojourn and his testimony of hope is still a beacon of light for this renewal.

# Centenary Harvest: A Review of Recent Books on Karl Barth

by DANIEL L. MIGLIORE<sup>1</sup>

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NUMEROUS BOOKS and articles were published in 1986 in celebration of the centenary of Karl Barth's birth. Among them are two modest-sized and thoroughly absorbing collections of his writings.

Spanning the half-century of Barth's activity as preacher and theologian, *A Karl Barth Reader* gathers brief passages from his sermons, letters, lectures, and books. The editors, Rolf Joachim Erler and Reiner Marquard, say that the purpose of their reader is to let Barth speak for himself "as a Christian, a theologian, and a fellowman." They have organized their selections in eight chapters whose themes "point to typical thought forms in Barth's theology," such as the first commandment as theological axiom, and the gift of freedom in Jesus Christ. Although the editors have usually arranged their selections chronologically in each chapter, their intent is to display the Christocentric coherence and continuity rather than the shifts and developments of Barth's theology. Brief introductions to the selections are provided to set them in their proper historical context.

While a collection of this sort cannot begin to cover the vast range of topics in Barth's theology—only a few passages from the *Church Dogmatics* are included—the present volume does succeed in giving readers a taste of the intensity, consistency, and power of Barth's theological work. Included are gripping passages not only from the period of the German church struggle but also from the early Safenwil sermons and from letters and addresses written in Barth's final years. Impressive, too, is the deep pastoral concern that shows through some of these selections, as in the letter to a despairing prisoner who is contemplating suicide: "Hold unshakably fast to one thing:

<sup>1</sup> Review of: Erler, Rolf Joachim and Reiner Marquard, eds. *A Karl Barth Reader*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986. Pp. 117. \$6.95; Barth, Karl. *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*. Foreword by John Updike. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986. Pp. 60. \$3.95; McKim, Donald K., ed. *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986. Pp. 186. \$10.95; Jüngel, Eberhard. *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986. Pp. 168. \$13.95.



God loves you even as the one you now are. . . . Can you follow me? Perhaps you can if you read the Christmas story in Luke's Gospel, not deeply but very simply, with the thought that every word there—and every word in Psalm 23, too—is also meant for you, and especially for you."

In college or seminary courses where only a few weeks can be devoted to Barth's writings, or in church study groups where a manageable introduction to his theology is desired, this volume will provide an attractive resource. While serving good purposes, however, it does not satisfy the need for a more comprehensive single-volume Barth reader suitable for use in advanced courses.

Slim but engrossing, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* is a collection of Barth's delightful musings on the composer whose music he considered "not mere entertainment . . . but food and drink." It is doubtful that anyone has rightly understood Barth who has not taken account of his boundless joy in the beauty of Mozart's music. Barth began every day to the sound of a Mozart recording before turning to the *Church Dogmatics*. He tells us that when he gets to heaven he will first of all inquire about Mozart, and only after that, about Augustine, St. Thomas, Luther, Calvin, and Schleiermacher. He surmises that, although the angels may play Bach when they are praising God, they play Mozart when they are together *en famille*, and "then our dear Lord listens with special pleasure." Why is Barth so attracted to Mozart? His own explanation is that Mozart's consummate music is characterized by a singular objectivity and creative freedom. It is an unobtrusive witness to grace, a parable—for those with ears to hear—of the victorious activity of God in the world. Fully aware of the dark side of creation and the depth of human misery, Mozart nevertheless creates music which resounds with the triumph of the divine Yea over the Nay. His music arises, according to Barth, from a "mysterious center" where one experiences not a balance of good and evil but a marvelous "upsetting of the balance, a turning in which the light rises and the shadows fall, though without disappearing, in which joy overtakes sorrow without extinguishing it, in which the Yea sings louder than the ever present Nay." In Barth's judgment, Mozart's music is not a message like Bach's, nor a personal confession like Beethoven's. "There is," Barth assures us, "no Mozartean metaphysics." "Mozart does not want to *say* anything; he just sings and sounds. . . . The subjective is never his theme. He never used his music to express himself, his situation, his moods."

It is clear from these essays that Barth sensed a deep kinship between the music of Mozart and what Barth insisted was the fundamental tone and the appropriate method of Christian theology. Just as Barth's theology attends

uncompromisingly to the gracious turning of God to the creation in Jesus Christ, so Barth believed that Mozart composed his radiant operas, concertos, divertimentos, and church music from that "mysterious center" where the Yea overtakes the Nay. Barth's praise of Mozart raises some fascinating questions for interpreters of his theology. If the music of Mozart is a parable of the Kingdom of God, why not also the work of other great musicians, painters, and writers? Are there not, as Barth explains in *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.1, many little lights and good words in the creation and in human history which reflect the one Word of God and the one Light of Life in Jesus Christ? However such questions are answered, Barth's love affair with Mozart explodes the myth that he had little interest in human culture.

In the foreword to the book, the novelist John Updike applauds the exceptional freedom for life in this world which Barth's interpretation of Mozart displays. Updike is mistaken, however, in suggesting that, apart from his Mozart essays, Barth's "version of Christianity" remains "a bit obscure" about the question, "What are we to do?" Someone should whisper into Updike's ear that Barth's "version" finds its ethical center in free human correspondence to the humanity of God in Jesus Christ, and hence is importantly different from the "version" of the "Barthian" professor in Updike's recent novel (cf. *Roger's Version*).

Turning from selections of Barth's writings to interpretations of his theology and appraisals of its continuing significance for the church, two recent books—one popular, one scholarly—deserve special notice.

*How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, edited by Donald K. McKim, is a collection of brief essays by twenty-six theologians, most of them American and British, who recall the impact of Barth's theology on their own development. Few of the authors would want to be tagged "Barthian"; indeed, many express gratitude to Barth for the independence of theological inquiry which he fostered. While most of the essays are laudatory, significant reservations about various aspects of Barth's theology are expressed by some contributors, and a few are sharply critical of the polemical element in his personality and thought. All would probably agree that the picture of Barth still widespread in America—as authoritarian, misanthropic repristinator of orthodoxy—is a gross distortion which misses the complex humanity of the man and the rich creativity of his theological work.

What are the values of a collection of essays of this sort? At one level, we are provided with a number of colorful personal vignettes: of the delight Barth took in the folk music played by a lively gypsy band in a Hungarian restaurant (Béla Vassady); of his vision of hell as utter solitude, and the great

comfort he found in singing simple hymns with close friends in his final weeks (Eberhard Busch); of his moving personal reconciliation with Emil Brunner that nevertheless resolved none of their theological differences (John Hesselink).

At another level, the essays describe the remarkably diverse impact that Barth had on various theologians. For "evangelicals," his influence seems to have been primarily that of liberating them for a new way of understanding the authority of Scripture which allowed room for the historical-critical approach (Bernard Ramm, Donald Bloesch); for those raised in the Reformed tradition in the American South (James Wharton), or as "an old fashioned, pietistic" Anglican (T. H. L. Parker), or as a member of the "free church" tradition (John Yoder), Barth's theology seems to have been a challenge to clarify and deepen the meaning of what they believed; for future political theologians (Harvey Cox, Robert McAfee Brown), Barth's own involvement in the German church struggle and his own political theology were formative.

At a third level, some of the essays are gems of brief but penetrating summaries of Barth's theological achievement (Paul Lehmann, Langdon Gilkey) and others offer lively *Auseinandersetzungen* with Barth (Thomas Torrance, Hendrikus Berkhof, John Cobb). There is also a fine essay by the Jewish theologian, Michael Wyschogrod.

Despite the differences among the writers, one feels a need for still greater diversity—both geographical and ecumenical—to achieve a truly representative picture of Barth's impact. There is only one essay by a woman (Elizabeth Achtemeier), and she chooses not to address the question of Barth's theology of man and woman. This is, of course, an inescapable issue for many women in the church today who are introduced to the *Church Dogmatics*. It is also regrettable that there are no Roman Catholic contributors and no third-world theologians. Barth felt that Roman Catholics were often the most perceptive interpreters of his work. Throughout his life he carried on intensive conversations with leading Catholic thinkers of the past and the present (e.g., Erich Przywara, Hans Urs von Balthasar), and toward the end of his life, he was deeply interested in the direction of post-Vatican II Catholicism. As for the third world, a number of theologians in Africa, Asia, and South America have been importantly influenced in Barth's theology. Naturally, a selection had to be made; but a more global and ecumenical representation of the impact of Barth's theology would have enriched further this otherwise excellent book.

Last but far from least, there is *Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy*, an im-

portant and demanding work by one of the premier Barth scholars in the world. Eberhard Jüngel, professor of systematic theology at Tübingen University, has the vast corpus of Barth's writings at his command, including much still unpublished material in the Barth Archives in Basel. Jüngel is a brilliant theologian in his own right, and he possesses a keen sensitivity for what is central in Barth's voluminous writings: the freedom of God, the humanity of God, the priority of grace that empowers rather than crushes human freedom, the Christocentric method that is pursued with unswerving and uncompromising rigor.

In his remarkable opening tribute, Jüngel summarizes Barth's achievement in the single word: God says "Yes" to the world in Jesus Christ. This Yes is, of course, very different from cheap sentimentalism. According to Jüngel, Barth "assailed the church and the world with the gospel. He pressed for enlightenment, not by the light of nature, but enlightenment by the light of the gospel." With this statement, we are placed at once in the middle of a central debate among interpreters of Barth today: What was Barth's relationship to the Enlightenment and modernity? Was it primarily negative and reactionary, a kind of throwback to pre-Enlightenment ways of thinking, as so many critics of Barth assume? Or was Barth committed, as Jüngel thinks, not to less but to more enlightenment, not to less but to more criticism, not to fideism but to deeper rationality "in the light of the gospel"?

The book is divided into four parts. In part one, we are given a sketch of Barth's life and work which, while highly compact, serves as a helpful orientation. Jüngel's threefold periodization of Barth's work (theological beginnings to the first edition of the commentary on Romans in 1919; dialectical theology to the *Christian Dogmatics* of 1927; and the period of the *Church Dogmatics* which roughly commences with the study of Anselm) is overly neat, as Jüngel himself admits and as his own research demonstrates. The decisive turn from liberal theology occurred before the Romans commentary was completed, and Barth was hard at work on his comprehensive Göttingen lectures in dogmatics (1924) early in the period that is usually described as "dialectical."

In part two, Jüngel examines Barth's theological beginnings in greater depth. The primary concern is not to locate the precise date of Barth's theological breakthrough, nor to order the development of his thought in a tidy sequence. The author is more concerned with the question of the "extent to which Barth's contemporary experiences ('praxis') helped to shape his knowledge." In particular, Jüngel takes issue with Friedrich Wilhelm Marquardt's argument that Barth's socialism constituted the theoretical frame-



work for his theology. Jüngel's position is that it is "a fundamental mistake to imagine that Barth's theology is a theory about God which *derives* from political premises. Barth's theology always had a strong political component, but never, from the first commentary on Romans on, did that component function as an overriding political principle. Simply put, for Barth, the political is surely a predicate of theology, but theology is never a predicate of the political." Although Jüngel is right in resisting the "politicization" of Barth's theology, he does not give adequate expression to Barth's insistence on a provisional and illusionless "fight for human righteousness" as part of Christian discipleship (IV/4, Lecture Fragments, 213). For Barth, advocacy of human rights and human freedom is responsible action "corresponding" to God's great revolution accomplished in Jesus Christ.

It is unlikely that Jüngel's arguments will settle the debate about the relationship between theology and political praxis among interpreters of Barth. We should expect the debate to continue and perhaps even accelerate when additional materials from the Barth Archives are published.

In parts three and four, Jüngel engages in detailed interpretation of two fundamental themes in Barth's theology: the relationship of gospel and law, and the depiction of the royal humanity of Jesus. According to Jüngel, Barth's reversal of the order of law and gospel fights against all dualism in the doctrine of God and insists on a Christologically based doctrine of sin. Equally important, Barth's understanding of gospel as *including* the law of God rather than being *antithetical* to it supports an anthropology of action corresponding to the divine action rather than an anthropology of pure passivity in relation to grace. Because human beings correspond to God's action as doers rather than as mere receivers, theological ethics is an inseparable part of dogmatics. Barth's theology, Jüngel concludes, has a political impact "because of its dogmatic character, not in spite of it." The implication of this analysis, not spelled out by Jüngel, is that the modern concern for human freedom, responsible action, and political engagement finds a new basis and legitimation in Barth's theological reconstructions.

Jüngel's book is an impressive scholarly contribution to the understanding of Barth and his theology. The English translation, expertly done by Garrett E. Paul, contains approximately one-half of the material in the German original, *Barth-Studien*, published in 1982. Not included in the English translation are Jüngel's valuable essays on Barth's understanding of analogy, his doctrine of baptism, his ethics of reconciliation, and his doctrine of God.



# The Multiple Purposes of Biblical Speech Acts

by PETER W. MACKY

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## *Introduction*

MANY READERS of the Bible approach it with just one major category in mind when considering what the writers' purposes were: to inform. There is no doubt that that is often one of their purposes but it is seldom the only one. Recent linguistic study has brought out the great variety of purposes human beings have in speaking (whether orally or in writing), so it is necessary to bring those categories over to the Bible and see what light they shed.

In this essay we will offer an array of seven major speech act purposes which can be helpful in understanding what the biblical writers were intending to do. This approach is based on these observations: speech is a type of action, and human beings have an infinite array of purposes (often combined) for their actions. Thus no list can hope to be complete, but the one presented here at least introduces the complexity.

## *The Main Purposes*

It has been common in the last century for philosophers to divide speech into two categories: "cognitive" (concerned with reality that is "objective") and "emotive" (concerned with inner human feelings). Then Austin pointed out that there is a whole category of speech acts that do not fall exactly into either category: promises, invitations, commands, threats, legal declarations, etc. In these acts, something non-linguistic is performed in the speaking itself, so Austin called them "performative" speech acts (J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*).

That threesome of cognitive, emotive, and performative speech acts has since been expanded as other linguists recognized that such simple catego-

rizations are inadequate. For example, Max Black said: "A [person] may speak in order to impart information, to deceive his hearer, to show friendliness, to ease social tension, to relieve his feelings, to show sympathy or some other attitude, and so on indefinitely" (*The Labyrinth of Language*, p. 115). So Black offered a more complex set of major categories which he labelled presentative (including informative), expressive (including emotive), dynamic, and performative [pp. 120-41].

Further distinctions have been introduced by writers concerned with biblical studies. First of all Eugene Nida pointed out the category of "evaluative" speech in which the speaker provides a personal evaluation of the subject (*Translating*, p. 44). Second, George Caird added what he called "cohesive" speech, the kind "designed primarily to establish rapport . . . to create a sense of mutual trust and common ethos" (*Language and Imagery*, pp. 32-36). Nida used the term "mystical" to cover that same purpose, which he defined as the "form of communication in which the relationship of source to receptor is primary" (p. 44). In this paper we will use the term "relational" for this type of speech.

Finally, many writers point to the way metaphors are used to enable readers to venture into unknown territory. For example, Earl MacCormac said that both scientists and theologians seek "to explore the mysteries that underlie the physical world and human existence." He called this a "plunge into the depths of mystery" and said that it offers justification for using metaphors because they represent the mysterious in terms of the better known (*Metaphor and Myth*, p. 140). We shall call this type "exploratory" speech.

In discussing these seven major speech act purposes we will begin with the most commonly recognized—presentative, expressive, evaluative, and performative—and spend only a brief time describing and exemplifying them. Most of our discussion will focus on the three that are lesser known and probably more important in the hierarchy of the biblical writers' intentions. It is likely that the biblical writers sought continually to move their hearers, to change them (dynamic purpose). Most of all it seems that their ultimate purpose was relational—to enable hearers to begin, or mature in, their relationship with God.

### *A. The Commonly Recognized Purposes*

(1) *Presentative Speech*. This type of speech can be defined as the kind which focusses on the object known and presents information or arguments about it, divorced as much as possible from the speaker's own feelings, values, commitments, and viewpoint (unless those are the object being directly referred

to). Nida called this type "designative" (p. 44), Black used "cognitive" and "informative" as sub-categories of "presentative" (pp. 117, 120), while others have used the term "referential" (Hutchison, *Language and Faith*, p. 32).

We can recognize this type of speech purpose when the speaker suggests that accurate information is important for the hearers to receive. For example, in Galatians 1 and 2 Paul wrote with a presentative purpose when he detailed his dealings with the Jerusalem church. He first of all wanted to inform the Galatians on what had happened (*informative* purpose). But further he implicitly argued for his equal authority with the Jerusalem apostles (*argumentative* purpose).

This presentative purpose is very common in the Bible. It is practiced when the hearers are ignorant (lacking information) or hold erroneous conclusions. It is no wonder that readers readily recognize this purpose, because it was very often present, though seldom alone.

(2) *Expressive Speech*. By "expressive" speech we mean the kind of verbalizing which has as its main or sole purpose the expression of the speaker's inner state or experience. The clearest examples are when the speaker makes an exclamation, like "Ow!" without even intending to communicate with anyone. But we also include in this category the communication taking place when someone simply pours out their heart, not (apparently) concerned with the hearer's response.

Job spoke expressively when he cried out: "Let the day perish wherein I was born . . ." (Job 3:2).

Jesus spoke expressively (among other purposes) when he said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Lk. 13:34).

Jeremiah spoke expressively when he cried out:

"Why is my pain unceasing,  
my wound incurable,  
refusing to be healed?  
Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook,  
like waters that fail?" (Jer. 15:18)<sup>1</sup>

(3) *Evaluative Speech*. Nida pointed out this category, defining it as the type which offers the speaker's judgment on some referent (p. 44). Of course this does not exclude the presence of presentative, expressive, and other purposes,

<sup>1</sup> For detailed discussions of expressive speech see Black, pp. 130ff. and Caird, pp. 25f.

but focusses on a particular purpose that we need to notice when it is present.

The Bible is full of such evaluations, for one of the main tasks the biblical writers were given was to point out the successes and failings of humankind. Here are several examples:

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

"I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5).

"You serpents, you brood of vipers . . ." (Matt. 23:33).

"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you . . . ?" (Gal. 3:1)

In the last three speech acts the speaker is also speaking expressively, revealing his feelings, but the evaluation is not simply an outburst of feeling for it is based on rational application of appropriate standards.

(4) *Performative Speech*. All speech does something, for every act of speaking adds that event to the history of the speaker and hearers. But some speech acts do non-linguistic things in the very act of being performed. When the jury foreman says "Not Guilty!" then the legal status of the defendant is changed. Likewise when the president signs a proposed law it thereby becomes the law, so the legal situation in the country is changed. Thus when God said "You shall have no gods before me" (Exod. 20:3), it was a performative act, for it changed the situation of his people from that moment on.

In the Bible the main types of performatives included<sup>2</sup>:

*Declarations*, like the one just given.

*Promises*, whereby the promiser becomes responsible for fulfilling the promise, liable to condemnation for failing. "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20) is a promise which creates a new situation.

*Invitations*, which can be seen as conditional promises—if you will do this, then I will do that. "Come to me, all you who are struggling under unbearable burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28) is such an invitation.

*Creations*, such as God saying "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). For human beings this is often done by creating characters: "A man had two sons . . ." (Lk. 15:11). In the speaking (indeed in the imagining before the words were uttered) those three characters came into existence.

### *B. The Profounder Purposes*

The purposes just described are fairly easy to identify and so have been fairly widely recognized as being useful for understanding what the biblical

<sup>2</sup> For more on performatives see Caird, pp. 20-25 and Black, pp. 140-42.

writers were doing. The ones about to be described are somewhat harder to identify but are rooted in the experience of virtually all users of speech. They are not esoteric but commonplace. It is just that we have not paid much attention to them because they seem to lie beneath the surface.

(1) *Exploratory Speech*. By "exploratory" speech we mean that kind which has as a central purpose to stimulate wondering in hearers, to arouse their curiosity and get them to begin exploring in the direction the speaker points out. We can explore many different kinds of reality: the physical, observable world, going places we have never been before; the past, coming to picture what observers report and what historians reconstruct; invisible realities, such as our own and others' inner lives, and the supernatural world. In the Bible it is this last realm of invisible spiritual realities that is commonly opened to our exploring, our wondering, our seeking to experience and understand more deeply.

Informative speech describes the way things are, and our task is to accept the information when it is reliable. Pedagogical speech (see below) offers a way to see, providing an imaginative structure which holds together seemingly disparate realities, and then we either see or do not see. Exploratory speech invites us to consider looking from a certain perspective, to begin to wonder about a mysterious reality, and our task is to begin exploring. When the exploring is successful we will sometimes gain new information and often gain new insight. But when the mystery is a profound one (sin, salvation, the cross, God) then we shall never in this life tame the wilderness.

Jesus' parables were often intended to stimulate exploring, for they were open-ended, leaving it to the hearers to try to discern how the parable illuminated reality. Consider this sentence: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened" (Matt. 13:33). Clearly that was intended to stimulate exploring, wondering about the mystery of the kingdom and so searching for signs of the "rising of the loaf."

It is likely that every metaphor used in the Bible was used partially for exploratory purposes, but that purpose is most obvious when the metaphor is novel, as with the leaven in dough. Perhaps the most stimulating of all the biblical metaphors, the one that has produced the greatest amount of exploring down through the ages, is this one: "Take; this is my body" (Mk. 14:22). We need very little imagination to put ourselves in the position of the disciples and hear what those words stimulate in us: What did he say? That bread is his body? How can that be? What does he mean? Why are we eating his "body"?



As the story comes down to us, Jesus offered virtually nothing by way of explanation. Are we to suppose that he was surprised by the wonder, curiosity, exploring that resulted from this enigmatic and enormously fruitful metaphor?

As other examples of novel biblical metaphors that evoke exploring, wonder about the invisible realities, hear the following:

"Is not my word like fire," says the Lord, "and like a hammer which breaks rocks in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29).

To keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations I was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan (II Cor. 12:7).

... you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power ... (Mk. 14:62).

Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the markets she raises her voice ... (Prov. 1:20).

... he emptied himself ... (Phil. 2:7).

When the speaker's purpose was, at least in part, to stimulate exploring on the part of hearers, then we are faithful to that purpose only when we explore and enable others to explore. If we take the image of leaven in the dough and give our hearers only the *results* of our exploring, our *conclusions* on what Jesus' meant, then we have killed the parable. The life and power of the parable is in its mystery, in its stimulation to exploring. Anything that diminishes exploring rejects the speaker's intention. Of course that does not matter a great deal when that brief, peripheral saying is before us. But "Take; this is my body" is absolutely central. If we believe we have explained the mystery, put it into precise abstract theological propositions, we may stand in the way of what Jesus was attempting to accomplish. For in that exploratory metaphor we find one that is also dynamic and relational.

(2) *Dynamic Speech*. "Dynamic" speech is the kind that has *dunamis*, power, the power to move hearers, to change them, to go beyond informing them. Some writers call this "evocative" speech because it evokes insights, and feelings, and changes of attitude or commitment. Clearly the biblical writers knew about speech that had power, that changed people, for examples are spread everywhere: Nathan to David (II Samuel 12); Peter to the crowd on Pentecost (Acts 2); Jesus in his parables. Indeed, direct mention is made of this dynamic purpose and effect, e.g., when God tells Jeremiah that his preaching will build up and destroy nations (Jer. 1:10) and Paul describes his own preaching as "not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power [*dunamis*]" (I Cor. 2:4).

In order to look at this type more closely we will divide it up into three sub-types depending on what it is intended to evoke: pedagogical (evoking insight), affective (evoking feelings), transforming (evoking changes in attitude or commitments).

(a) *Pedagogical* (Evoking Insight). When someone is teaching another, a great many purposes may be present. Clearly teachers often intend to speak informatively, and argumentatively, but the purpose we are concerned with now is evoking "insight." Insight is the kind of thing a person gains when they have been puzzled, not understanding how the data (observations, reports, ideas, etc.) can all fit together. The teacher then offers a way of "seeing" and the student may respond "Oh! Now I see." This happens, for example, when a detailed description of an object has been given but the hearer cannot put the details together. So the teacher draws a picture, and that enables the student to "see."

It is common for the biblical writers, as for teachers of all cultures, to use metaphors pedagogically, to evoke insight. For example the Galatians were puzzled because they could not integrate two ideas: They are called to live by faith, not by the law; yet God, in whom they are to believe, is the one who gave the law. In reply Paul said (in Galatians 3f.), "Think of it this way: a man signs a will giving all he owns to his children, unconditionally; while the children are minors they are under an authority who can treat them as virtual slaves; but when they reach adulthood they are free from that authority. So it is with God's people." The metaphor (expanded into a similitude) provides an imaginative picture which can, for a receptive hearer, evoke insight. Paul intended that his hearers would respond: "Oh, so that's the way it is. Now I see how we can hold those two ideas together."

Such insight evoking goes beyond simply informing, for it provides a structure which can hold together all relevant information, and so can bridge the gap between ideas that seem disconnected, or even contradictory.

How could God's law, his eternal will, be abrogated by Christ's death? It is like the way a wife is under the marriage law only as long as her husband lives. Thus death can free us from law (Rom. 7:1-3).

How could the disciples rejoice when Jesus was about to leave them? Because the present pain was the mother's anguish before the birth of her child. She gets through it by knowing joy is to follow (Jn. 16:21f.).

Pedagogical speech works by saying: look at it this way; imagine it as if it were like this; conjure up this picture in your mind and you'll see how it sheds light where previously there was darkness. So we picture God as our

father and can understand how he is both loving and chastening, both rewarding and gracious, both supportive and judging, because we know how human parents at their best integrate these seeming contraries. Thus when some of his hearers could not understand how Jesus could accept sinners and not become unclean he told his parables, e.g., The Prodigal Son. Receptive hearers could then have an "Aha!" experience, enabled to integrate personal righteousness with acceptance of sinners. They were given eyes to see (II Kings 6:17; Acts 26:18).

(b) *Affective*. When a speaker's purpose is "affective," he intends to arouse particular feelings in the hearer. This is commonly done when the speaker wants others to share his feelings, but can also be done when the speaker stimulates hearers' feelings in order to move them to act in a particular way.

The biblical writers often wrote in ways that indicate they intended to arouse feelings in their hearers. For example, when Peter said, "You denied the Holy and Righteous One . . . killed the author of life" (Acts 3:14f.) he intended to make his hearers feel ashamed, perhaps even fearful. Or when Paul wrote of Christ "that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor" (II Cor. 8:9) he was attempting to evoke feelings of gratitude in his hearers. Or consider Jesus' description of the Pharisees as "white-washed tombs which outwardly appear beautiful but inside are full of . . . uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27). Jesus intended to arouse feelings of disgust in his hearers.

We can evoke feelings in many ways, but perhaps the two general categories are these: by describing the situation in graphic terms, or by using a graphic metaphor. When we describe a person's actions or condition, either positively or negatively, we tend to evoke feelings in hearers. Few people can hear in detail the account of an innocent child suffering enormously without pity being evoked, and perhaps also anger at those responsible for the suffering.

But when a graphic, emotion-evoking description is not possible, then we can use a metaphor that has the same kind of power (white-washed tombs). Consider Nathan's story to David of the rich man taking his neighbor's one ewe lamb (II Samuel 12). Nathan presumably intended to arouse the anger in David that his story produced. That was very powerful affective speech.

Of course affective speech, arousing hearers' feelings, is often done by using expressive speech, the kind in which the speaker shares her own feelings. But the two are worth distinguishing because they can be separate and we will at times misunderstand what the author was intending if we cannot tell them apart.

Secondly we need to observe that affective speech usually is united with presentative or pedagogical purposes, for our emotions will not be aroused unless we believe the description (presentative) or insight (pedagogical) is true. Only if we agree that the Pharisees *are* "white-washed tombs" will we feel towards them what Jesus apparently intended us to feel. The Pharisees themselves probably did not accept this metaphor as insightful, so they were offended at Jesus rather than having disgust aroused towards themselves.

(c) *Transforming*. Even a cursory skimming of the Bible will lead us to recognize that the biblical writers often were aiming at changing their hearers' lives. The prophets and Jesus and the early evangelists often made it clear that their goal was to evoke repentance, a change of orientation, new attitudes, a new commitment. When that is the purpose we have transforming speech.

How such inner transforming works is quite mysterious, for God's spirit is the wind blowing as he wills through human spirits and we cannot tell whence it comes, or when, or how. Nevertheless we can say a few things about this power of speech to move people in new directions because not all such transformations are divinely inspired.

It is plausible to suggest that transforming of attitudes and commitments often happens by a combination of pedagogical and affective impulses that together point hearers down a new road. Effective pedagogical speech gives hearers a new way of looking at some part of the world, i.e., a new framework, a new understanding. Affective speech, when it has worked, arouses hearers' emotions, stimulating their desires for change of some kind. When those two are combined and give hearers a new way of thinking about their own lives, and a desire to be different, then they are ready to move, if the speaker points the way. *New insight, plus aroused feelings, plus a new direction pointed out, can impel hearers to head down that new path.*

Consider for example Jesus' parable of The Good Samaritan. It is probable that one of Jesus' purposes here was pedagogical, to provide a metaphorical picture that could deal with hearers' puzzlement over this dichotomy: how can Jesus be a man of authority, speaking for God, when the established authorities (priests and Levites) oppose him? The story suggests an answer in the contrast between the caring Samaritan and the uncaring Judaeans. In this simple picture Jesus provided a basic metaphorical structure for relating himself (and his followers) to the Jewish powers that be.

In addition, of course, the story had affective power. If we receive it with our imaginations, lying in the ditch with the victim, our feelings will be aroused: anger and disgust at the uncaring priest and Levite; gratitude, won-



der, and perhaps a little reticence at being touched by the unclean Samaritan.

Along with the insight evoked and the feelings aroused the story also presents, in vivid, understandable, appealing form, a new way of life. In the Samaritan we see Jesus' whole way of life, his attitude, his preaching purposes, concretized. We cannot miss the call, even though in the story itself no overt call is made.

Combining insight, feeling, and a new path provides power to draw hearers into following in Jesus' footsteps. It was not simply a rational process, i.e., demonstrating that this is the true way and then convincing people to follow that way. Rationality is not bypassed, but it is not the main channel here. Instead Jesus apparently intended to touch his hearers' hearts, to stimulate their imaginations, to provide an impulse to their will.

Transforming speech, the powerful, moving, action-stimulating way of interacting with hearers, needs to be recognized for what it is. In particular, when we are interpreting the Bible, re-expressing its message for hearers today, we need to be constantly aware of this principle: Transforming speech can only be adequately re-expressed in transforming speech. Our interpreting is faithful only insofar as it has the same effect. So when we take a transforming parable, and simply analyze its major points, we have turned a transforming speech act into simply an informative one. It is likely that the only adequate way to re-express a transforming parable is by writing a new transforming parable, one that fits our hearers' experiences and biases and puzzlements in a way parallel to Jesus doing the same in The Good Samaritan.

(3) *Relational Speech*. When someone says to those around him, "You are my friends . . ." (Jn. 15:14), that is a relational speech act. Or if he says, "Behold, I am with you always . . ." (Matt. 28:20) that too is relational speech. "Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head" (Psalm 3:3) is relational too.

*Relational speech is that kind in which a major purpose is to enhance personal relationships*, most commonly between speaker and hearer, but sometimes between the hearer and a third party represented by the speaker. The latter is the case when a spokesman, a messenger, speaks for the one who sent him. For example Isaiah spoke and wrote these words, but they were God's reaching to his people, seeking to draw them back into the relationship from which they had fallen away:

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet they shall be as white as snow (Isa. 1:18).



That example of relational speech is also performative, an invitation, a conditional promise: if you return, then cleansing and forgiveness and a new relationship await you. Quite often that is the case, that a performative speech act (creating a new extra-linguistic situation) is aimed at changing the personal relationships of speaker and hearer. But not all performatives are relational (e.g., "Not guilty!") and not all relational speech acts are performatives. As an example of the latter consider the way two people who have just met may sound each other out by talking about the weather or other innocuous subjects: the real transaction takes place in tone of voice, warmth of expression, body language, etc., for the purpose is to begin a relationship.

The most obvious examples of relational speech in the Bible may be those metaphors based on human relationship. Paul called his readers "my beloved brethren" (I Cor. 15:58), "my beloved sons" (I Cor. 4:14), and "my little children" (Gal. 4:19). God, through Hosea, spoke of the day when Israel would once again call him "my husband" (Hosea 2:16). Later God speaks of Israel as his "son," the one he brought up, punished, and will redeem (Hosea 11) thereby inviting Israel to be his son. Even more directly we hear the Lord say to Israel (via Moses), "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. . . . You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:2). That is relational speech: God reaches out to them, reminds them of his graciousness to them already, and invites them into the relationship of lord-servant.

It is likely that if we asked which of the variety of purposes we have listed in this paper was the highest one, the biblical writers for the most part would choose this one. The prophets clearly had as their highest aim to bring Israel back into a right relationship with the Lord. Paul, too, speaks over and over again of his relationship to Christ as the center of everything, summarized in the clause "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3:10).

Most clearly of all we find this in Jesus, with his call to his hearers to follow him. Perhaps we could summarize and exemplify biblical relational speech in Jesus' invitation: "Come to me, all you who are laboring under burdens too heavy for you to bear alone, for I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Matthew apparently offered that, not simply as a report of what Jesus once said to a few hearers, but as an invitation from the risen Lord to all who read or heard the Gospel story.

### *Conclusion*

In this essay we have not described all the purposes of speech that can be discerned, because that would take too long to accomplish. What we have

done is to provide a beginning insight into the variety of speech act purposes that can plausibly be discerned as lying behind the words the biblical writers uttered. In particular we have emphasized relational, dynamic, and exploratory speech acts because they seem to be very important in the Bible and yet have not been adequately recognized by many readers of the Bible.

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# The Grace of God's Critique

by THOMAS W. GILLESPIE

*Dr. Thomas W. Gillespie is president and professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. This sermon was preached in Miller Chapel on April 2, 1987.*

*Text: This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man [every woman] will receive his [her] commendation from God (I Corinthians 4:1-5).*

“**H**AVE YOU EVER WONDERED,” she asked, “why the Seminary is such a bitchy place?”

I have indeed wondered about that, and yet the question came as a surprise. For I had seen the questioner three hours earlier in the dining hall at lunch, and at that time she was absolutely aglow. As we stood in line together, she radiated as she told me of the seminar she had just completed at the Center of Continuing Education. The seminar leader had been a seasoned pastor whose wisdom and insight had generated in this younger colleague enthusiasm and inspiration for the task of ministry. “I can hardly wait to get back to my church and put into practice all of the wonderful things I have learned this week,” she said in parting.

Now three hours later, at a meeting of Teaching Church pastors, her face was glum and her mood foul. When I commented on this transformation of countenance, she told me what had occurred over lunch. She had joined a table of fellow seminar participants, and they had devoted the luncheon conversation to criticism of the seminar and to derogation of its leader. That is when she asked, “Have you ever wondered why the Seminary is such a bitchy place?” Then she added, “I love this school, and I am increasingly grateful for the education I received here. But I do not miss the constant carping and criticism even a little.”

Her question continues to haunt me. Why is the Seminary such a bitchy place?

A part of the answer, I think, is the commitment of higher education in our Western world to what Paul Ricoeur calls *critique*. *Critique* is the legacy of the Enlightenment. It is an attitude of mind which seeks certainty by means of radical doubt. The Enlightenment taught us to accept nothing as true on the basis of mere authority and to believe only that which cannot be doubted. To think authentically is to think critically. Everything must be examined and analyzed. Nothing must be taken at face value. Failure to think critically is to consign ourselves to the realm of what Ricoeur again calls "the first naivete." The Enlightenment heritage encourages us all to engage constantly in "a hermeneutics of suspicion."

The impact of this attitude of mind upon higher education is enormous. A graduate theological education consists in learning how to read the Bible both historically and critically. It involves us in the critical appropriation of our ecclesiastical and theological traditions. The danger, of course, is not only that we will think naively, but that we will think only critically. For analysis without synthesis is merely destructive. Listen to these lines from an address by Dr. K. Patricia Richardson, currently Chair of the Department of Administration, Planning, and Social Policy at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education:

Traditional education has emphasized content mastery and critical analysis far more than synthesis. It is my observation that our best students graduate from college today with rather well-honed skills in tearing apart any argument. What they cannot do very well is to put together information to build an argument or to solve a problem.

The rancher down in Texas made the same point when he said, "Any jackass can kick down a barn that took ten good carpenters to build."

Now hear me clearly. I am not suggesting that we who are called to Christian faith and ministry should retreat from *critique* into the realm of the first naivete. But I am suggesting that we must learn to move through criticism into the realm of what Ricoeur calls "the second naivete" where the bits and pieces of our analysis come together again in a post-critical synthesis.

Every attempt at synthesis, of course, is vulnerable to further analysis. That is simply a fact of life. The point, however, is that we may not content ourselves in the ministry of the gospel with the joys and pleasures of *critique*. If we engage in deconstruction, we must also engage in reconstruction. At least we must if we intend to be channels of God's redeeming and renewing love.

So the educational experience itself engenders in us a critical attitude of

mind. Yet there is a fine line between authentic *critique*, and mere negative criticism. Criticism of this kind has a nose for what is wrong, for what is flawed, for what is imperfect. And it focuses upon these things to the exclusion of what is right, what is worthy, and what is valuable.

Like the story of the psychologist who showed a patient a sheet of white paper with a small ink blot on it. "What do you see?" the psychologist asked. "I seen an ink blot," the patient replied. "But what about the rest of the usable white paper?" asked the psychologist.

We are all inclined to see the ink blots on the world and on the Church and on one another. Too often, however, we fail to see the goodness and the beauty and the truthfulness of that which is marred by the ink blots.

Over these past four years I have developed not a fear of seminary students but a fear for you. My fear is that you are long on condemnation and short on redemption. The papers I have read in my own courses tell me that many believe apparently that the world can be changed for the better merely by yelling at it. I tell you in all sincerity that it is not so. You cannot establish justice merely by condemning injustice. Neither can you create orthodoxy by condemning heresy. Righteousness and truth are the products of love rather than criticism.

Not that love is uncritical. Quite the contrary. But love is critical in the service of redemption and affirmation. Which is to say that before ministers raise their "prophetic" voices they need to establish their pastoral credibility. Without that credibility, we will not be heard.

If the line is fine between *critique* and criticism, it is even finer between criticism and what my young questioner described as "bitchiness." The term may be indeed inelegant, but it is certainly descriptive. It describes an attitude that is negative about anything and everything that is positive. It designates people who are discontent with the world, the Church, other people—and especially themselves. Feeling miserable about themselves, they are determined to make the rest of the world feel miserable too.

They are like the man who went to the doctor with symptoms of arthritis. After a careful examination, the physician suggested that the condition might be psychosomatic in origin. The problem might well be the product of the man's evident hostility. As they talked, it came out that this patient was alienated from his son-in-law. Finally, the man said, "Do you mean that my arthritis might disappear if I learned to love my son-in-law?" "Could be," the doctor replied. "No thanks," the man declared defiantly, "I'll keep the arthritis." Unfortunately, that man's name is *Legion* for he is many.

So why is the Seminary such a bitchy place? In part because it is an edu-



cational institution which encourages students to think critically. In part because we slide easily from *critique* into criticism. And in part because we are so unhappy with ourselves that we are unhappy with everything and everyone else. What we forget is that the ministry—our ministry—is itself subject to *critique* and to criticism and to the unhappiness of others.

The apostle Paul knew this from his own ministerial experience. He discovered early on that even “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” are vulnerable to criticism. The Corinthians apparently loved to play “Pick Paul Apart.” His response to such criticism is worth pondering:

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

The message is clear. We are all subject to *critique*, but not primarily or ultimately to the *critique* of human courts. We ourselves, our ministry, even our theology stands under the judgment of the Lord. Even though our consciences may be clear, that is no guarantee that we are guiltless. But in that final *critique*, in that eschatological judgment when the things now hidden in darkness are brought to light and the purposes of the heart are revealed, the result will not be condemnation but commendation. “Then every man [every woman] will receive his [or her] commendation from God.”

For God’s critique, unlike ours, is redemptive.

# The Glory of God and Human Glory

by PATRICK D. MILLER

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**Text:** *O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth, you who have set your glory over the heavens, and out of the mouth of babes and infants you have established strength on account of your adversaries to put an end to the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them and mortals that you pay attention to them? Yet you have made them little less than God and have crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea. O Lord, our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8).*

THE QUESTION of who and what we are as human beings and what is our place in this universe of time and space is one of the issues that not only arises in the mind of each of us but is a central concern of Christian faith. There are various ways that the Christian tradition has given answer to that question, conversing with but also challenging other views. This morning I want to suggest that the eighth Psalm is one of those voices in Scripture presenting a perspective on the human situation that is basic to the Judaeo-Christian tradition and worthy of our attention even if it is sharply different from some of the other dominant ideologies of our time.

It would be a mistake, however, to begin by assuming that this familiar Psalm has as its *primary* intention to offer theological reflection on human nature. Its fundamental aim is both to express as well as to call forth from the worshipping congregation the praise of the God of creation. It is about human glory—and we shall come to that—but it is human glory under and derived from the glory of God. If there is any doubt about that, one has only

to note how the song begins and ends—with the same jubilant shout of praise: “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!” The community of ancient Israel saw in its daily life, in the blessings of a prosperous land, in the victories and defeats of its armies, in all these things, the work of God; but over and over again it found the grandest testimony to the rule of God and the majesty of God in the created order, a universe of such vastness, complexity, power, and beauty that by its very existence it renders praise to the one who in mysterious power has brought it into being, always guiding and ordering it. The psalmist looks at the heavens, the moon and the stars, and is overwhelmed to see this magnificent work of the fingers of God.

And here is one of the places where the passage of time and the onset of modernity have done little to modify the reaction of the psalmist. I doubt if there is anyone here who has not at some time stood in the night as did the Psalmist and gazed in awe at the skies, looking at a beam of light from a star and realizing that beam has been traveling 186,000 miles per second toward us for millions of years. And in the very silent wonder, our beings, often inarticulately, praise the Creator of it all.

Several years ago when my family was spending some time in England, our youngest son, Patrick, came home one afternoon from a long visit with his school friend Martin. Mary Ann and I realized very quickly that something was clearly troubling Patrick greatly. When we asked him what was the problem, he said, “I don’t think that I can tell you.” We became *very* concerned at that point, wondering what in the world had happened at the friend’s house. Finally we pressed him into telling us. With great reluctance he confessed that he had discovered that his friend did not believe in God. That certainly was not what we had imagined, and we breathed a silent sigh of relief as we asked him what he had said to Martin upon discovering this devastating fact. He replied, “I asked him how he thought the earth and the planets and the stars got here if there is no God.”

Patrick’s response was naive and expressed a way of thinking about God that even some theologians would reject. But I think there is an element in the midst of that naivete that is undeniably on target. Not as if one could read a doctrine of God out of the created order or give solid proof of the existence of God. Attempt that and it will probably provoke as many problems as it resolves. Rather it is to see in the mysteries and wonders of the universe some of those clues, those rumors of angels, as Peter Berger calls them, that point us to the majesty of God; and to hear in the music of the spheres the praise of the God that made them and whose glory transcends them all.

So the Psalm in its basic affirmation expresses and bids us out of our own wonder and awe to join in praise of the Maker of heaven and earth.

But if it begins and ends in that praise of God, at its center, the psalm is focused upon the human creature. For the psalmist's gaze upon the universe has produced *two* reactions: one is a spontaneous reaction of praise; the other is an equally spontaneous and even more inevitable question. It is the question about the place of human beings in such a vast universe:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars which you have established,  
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
and mortals that you pay attention to such (8:3-4).

It is a very obvious question, and the answer seems equally obvious. But before turning to it, let me place alongside the question and the thoughts of this stargazer of many centuries past the thoughts and words of a contemporary stargazer. He is Stephen Weinberg, a physicist and astro-physicist who has written a fascinating book entitled *The First Three Minutes*, and subtitled *A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe*. In the book, he seeks to present for the intelligent lay person a picture of what is the general, if not unanimous, consensus of contemporary science about the beginnings of the universe. He suggests approximately when the universe began, describes what the initial explosion may have been like, and then, in some detail creates a sort of movie scenario of the first three minutes of the universe's history. At the end of the book he speculates about the future, whether the universe will go on indefinitely expanding or fall back upon itself in a return to its original beginning point. Then he concludes with these words:

However all these problems may be resolved, and whichever cosmological model proves correct, there is not much of comfort in any of this. It is almost irresistible for humans to believe that we have some special relation to the universe, that human life is not just a more-or-less farcical outcome of a chain of accidents reaching back to the first three minutes, but that we were somehow built in from the beginning. As I write this I happen to be in an airplane at 30,000 feet, flying over Wyoming en route home from San Francisco to Boston. Below, the earth looks very soft and comfortable—fluffy clouds here and there, snow turning pink as the sun sets, roads stretching straight across the country from one town to another. It is very hard to realize that this all is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. It is even harder to re-

alize that this present universe has evolved from an unspeakably unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.

But if there is no solace in the fruits of our research, there is at least some consolation in the research itself. Men and women are not content to comfort themselves with tales of gods and giants, or to confine their thoughts to the daily affairs of life; they also build telescopes and satellites and accelerators, and sit at their desks for endless hours working out the meaning of the data they gather. The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life a little above the level of farce, and gives it some of the grace of tragedy.

Weinberg's gazing at the stars produces for him an answer to the kind of question that erupts from the mouth of the psalmist, an answer that would seem to be the direction toward which the psalmist from a religious rather than a scientific view is moving. We are "just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe" that becomes more pointless the more it is comprehensible. Only a very few things "lift human life a little above the level of farce." More surprising than such a conclusion on the part of Weinberg is, I think, the conclusion of the one who speaks through the psalm, one who sees no less clearly the vastness of the cosmos and knows its threatening potential. Over against a judgment that human life is a "little above the level of farce" comes the claim that the human reaction of God is little less than divine. The grandeur of the universe and the transcendence of God lead not to a view that human beings are puny bits of matter inexplicably set in a tiny corner of a hostile universe, but that they are like God. They are kings in the kingdom that is God's universe, both in their nature—crowned with glory and honor—and in their purpose—to rule the works of God. Not by accident but by the loving intention of God who has made us "little less than gods," who has crowned us, given us rule over that very universe that seems to render us mere specks of cosmic dust.

Now, my friends, if one is looking for a high anthropology, an optimistic view of human life, I think one can go no further than that. While other voices sound in the pages of Scripture, this understanding reverberates from beginning to end. You cannot get past the first page of the Bible—let me put it another way: you are *not supposed* to get past the first page—without discovering that such a view of human nature and purpose is the initial assumption of God's story with and for humanity from beginning to end. That



is, of course, a claim of faith. One may as well reject it as claim it. Not all the evidence leads to such a conclusion—I shall come back to that. But two things need to be emphasized: One is that it is fundamental to the Christian view of our life under God that God has given to women and men a divine nature, a royal purpose, a central place in the cosmos. Secondly, it makes all the difference in the world if this is *your starting point*—the conviction of the worth and grandeur of human creation, of a man or a woman, that is given by God. To set such a view as your starting point, your basic assumption, greatly affects how you think and work and act.

I know a psychiatrist who seems to me to have a rather naive distaste for talk about sin and the devil and tends to reject such out of hand. But she has marvelous healing results with people with all sorts of problems that many of the rest of us would regard as belonging at least in part to the realm of sin and the devil. I think that her success is due in part at least to her deep conviction that every one she sees is first and fundamentally a child of God and so to be viewed and treated. What I am suggesting is that much of what we believe and do in life grows out of our basic assumption and starting point about the human condition and that one of the strongest notes in Scripture is this view of human being as reflecting the nature and rule of God.

We cannot leave the Psalm without realizing, however, that in and out of Scripture another answer altogether is given to the question about humankind that comes forth from the Psalmist. That question is repeated two more times in the Old Testament. In the 144th Psalm:

O Lord, what are human beings that you regard them,  
or mortals that you think of them.

Humankind is like a breath, whose days are like a passing shadow.

And in Job (7:16ff):

I loathe my life; I would not live for ever.

Let me alone for my days are a breath.

What is a man that you make so much of him,

that you set your mind upon him,

visit him every morning, test him every evening.

...

Let me alone that I may swallow my spit.

Here is a very different attitude, where the sense of a special place in the creation has become a man's burden and God's attention not a sign of God's grace but a part of his affliction.

These words have been called a parody of Psalm 8. But that is to belittle both Job and his words, which reflect his sense from his own terrible experience of a tension between the religious tradition that claims a special place in the creation for each of us as persons and life as it is often actually lived. Further there are many who would find Job's words more true to their experience than those of the Psalmist. For there *is* a dark side to human experience in the reality of suffering, tragedy, and inhumanity, a dark side that cannot be glossed over or eliminated either from reality or from our vision.

I read about it yesterday in the newspaper in the continuing story of the violent death of a black man in Howard Beach and the report of a county thirty miles north of my hometown of Atlanta in which no black person has dared to set foot for seventy-five years. I saw it the other night on television in a film clip of a new and very authentic movie about Vietnam that showed a soldier with a pistol placed against the head of a small girl, and I remembered other such pictures of executions in the streets of Vietnamese cities and young children screaming and naked with their clothes burned off by napalm. And as I thought about these things yesterday I remembered the inexplicable death at Christmas time of the little child of a couple at the Seminary and wondered how many other children died last night of the ravages of disease and hunger. But I knew that I did not really want to know.

When all that presses upon me, it becomes clearer to me why the author of the Letter to the Hebrews applied the words of Psalm 8 to Jesus and his experience, seeing in his suffering and death the crown of glory and honor. Psalm 8 holds good. Even in the face of the threats and tragedy of life, it is not merely an idea or wishful thinking. It describes God's intention for us and our place in God's creation. It remains the basic assumption we hold about ourselves and every other person. But in the good news that is declared and demonstrated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, another word comes into our midst, confirming that indeed God has given to us as human beings a high place in all God's creation—and even more. The extent to which God is mindful of us and pays attention to us, as the Psalmist says, is only fully seen in the love that is manifest in Jesus Christ, who is God's identification with humankind in its glory *and in all its suffering and tragedy and shame*. The latter cannot be denied as a part of our human fate. It can and has been taken up into the fate and heart of the very God who made and crowned us.

There is much that remains yet unseen to me in all of this. It is capable of theological reflection and discussion, but not I think susceptible to easy resolution and understanding. But what matters is sufficiently clear and com-

prehensible to me in a photograph that I saw several years ago enlarged on the walls of Norwich Cathedral in England. It was a picture of a Catholic nun bent over feeding a truly skeletal figure of a man so starved or wasted with disease that he had only about 12 hours of life left, according to the caption below the photograph. Nothing in all that beautiful cathedral is now more vivid in my memory than that picture of an unnamed sister in her flowing white robe holding the head of her dying and even more anonymous brother as she fed him. I truly believe that in that act she crowned him with glory and honor even as she demonstrated the love of the one she follows, that in the midst of the evil and suffering of human life God pays attention and God cares.

Amen, and to God be all the glory.

# PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, 1986

DIOGENES ALLEN

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RICHARD S. ARMSTRONG

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*Article*

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WILLIAM BROWER

*Article*

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DONALD E. CAPPS

*Article*

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*Book Reviews*

Review of *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalysis of Culture*, by Paul W. Pruyser. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25:133-34.

Review of *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*, by Bernard Spilka, Ralph W. Hood, Jr., and Richard L. Gorsuch. *Contemporary Psychology* 31:780-82.

HORTON M. DAVIES

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*Article*

"The Lord's Supper in the Congregational Christian Tradition." *Prism: A Theological Forum for the United Church of Christ* I, 2 (Fall):28-36.

JANE D. DOUGLASS

*Article*

"Calvin's Use of Metaphorical Language for God: God as Enemy and God as Mother." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 77, pp. 126-40.

CRAIG DYKSTRA

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Review of *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*, by Richard W. Fox; and *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses*, edited by Robert McAfee Brown. *Theology Today* XLIII, 2 (July), pp. 267-70.

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Review of *A Trumpet in Darkness: Preaching to Mourners*, by Robert G. Hughes. *Homiletic* 11, 2:9-10.

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#### DONALD MACLEOD

##### Editor

"Pulpit Resource and Ecumenical Commentary." *Good News Supplement* (6 monthly 6000-word expositions, Common Lectionary, Year B, January-June). Lake Worth, FL: Sunday Publications, Inc.

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#### JOEL MARCUS

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#### BRUCE M. METZGER

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 "God's Freedom and Human Freedom." In *Gottes Zukunft, Zukunft der Welt: Festschrift für Jürgen Moltmann zum 60. Geburtstag*, edited by Hermann Deuser, Gerhard Martin, Konrad Stock, and Michael Welker, pp. 240-49. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag.

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PATRICK D. MILLER, JR.

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BEN C. OLLENBURGER

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## PETER J. PARIS

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## JUDITH E. SANDERSON

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## MARK KLINE TAYLOR

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Review of *The Thought of Paul Tillich*, by James Luther Adams, ed. *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* VII (November) 3:301-2.

CHARLES C. WEST

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Review of *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, by Ernst Feil. *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* VII, 3:302-3.

Review of *Three Worlds of Christian-Marxist Encounters*, ed. by Nicholas Piediscalzi and Robert Thobaben. *Missiology* XIV, 3 (July):356.

RONALD C. WHITE, JR.

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Review of *Southern Tradition in Theology and Social Criticism, 1830-1930: The Religious Liberalism and Social Conservatism of James Worley Miles, William Porcher DuBose, and Edgar Gardner Murphy*, by Ralph E. Luker. *Church History* (March):141-42.

## Editor

*The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*. Princeton, NJ.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Achtemeier, P. J. (gen. ed.). *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1985. Pp. 1178 + numerous plates (some in color) and 18 colored maps. \$29.95.

Sponsored by the prestigious Society of Biblical Literature, this attractive, authoritative reference work is highly recommended. It is user-friendly: inexpensive, handy, clearly written, without unnecessary jargon, and with apt and abundant illustrations. Contributors include Princeton Seminary professors Charlesworth, Metzger, and Roberts. This edition is not a mere updated version; it is "a totally new edition." Included now are articles on "Pseudepigrapha," "Nag Hammadi," "Ebila," "Sociology of the New Testament," "Sociology of the Old Testament." The range of the dictionary can be discerned from the following list: "canon," "Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus (A.D. 39-81)," "Negeb," "Bible and Western literature," "Dodo," "loving-kindness," "Paul," and "Revelation to John."

Here are some errors: Under "Capernaum" the reader is told to see "Peter; Synagogue." The reference should be to "Peter." "Canon" is not "a Greek word" (p. 153); in Greek it is a Semitic loan word used in Assyrian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic (see Hebrew *qāneh*, "reed," then "measuring staff"). It is disappointing to read that the "term 'Kingdom of God' occurs only in the NT" (p. 527). Note well the following passages: "the Kingdom of God" (Wisdom of Solomon 10:9), "the Kingdom of our God" (Psalms of Solomon 17:4); compare Sibylline Oracles 3.47, 3.767, Tobit 13:2 (1), Wisdom of Solomon 6:4, Testament of Benjamin 9:1, Testament of Moses 10:1, Testament of Abraham 8:3, the War Scroll 6.6, 12.7. The Gospel of Thomas must not be discarded as "gnostic" (p. 356); and the caption to the photograph of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas (p. 356) should read "The closing page . . ." not "The opening page. . ." Such slips are infrequent.

The volume is a magnificent mirror of the vast and visible advances made in the field of biblical studies. The work should be on the desk of every serious preacher and student of the Bible.

JAMES H. CHARLESWORTH  
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Stambaugh, John E., and David L. Balch. *The New Testament in its Social Environment*. Library of Early Christianity. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986. Pp. 194, 16 plates.

One finds in *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, by Stambaugh and Balch, two pictures of life in the Roman Empire: one, rather positive, the other more ambiguous and implicitly critical. The former picture stresses the "accommodating" aspects of the Empire. Chapter 2, for instance, begins by talking quite literally about the variety of accommodations on the public roads of the Empire. Local cults provided accommodations and employment for members from other cities. The authors



go on to show how cities and official Rome itself made space for the shrines of a variety of cults and ethnic religions to meet the demand for a home away from home.

Consequently, the established order *accommodated* and even encouraged their practice. It was in general a good thing to keep all the gods well tended and favorably disposed toward the state (p. 45, emphasis added).

The gods returned the compliment, apparently, by being tolerant of other loyalties and not indisposed to official obedience. Baal did not even mind being called Saturn on occasion, and the theologians of the empire found similarities or even a common identity among the gods. This is a familiar picture of a "modern" society that is tolerant, cosmopolitan, pluralistic, and therefore capable of sustaining adequate levels of participation, taxation, and commitment among diverse groups. The picture is also a version of what sociologists have called "mass" society; Stambaugh and Balch perceive it as a world that was often alienating and "impersonal," in which cults could provide a basis for social location or self-identity. This is their reading of how the system worked. The surfaces of social life, however, tend to obscure what is less visible but perhaps more powerful and pervasive in the experience of individuals themselves.

Their alternative picture hints at precisely this latent dimension of social life in the Empire. The authors do observe that the Romans occasionally expelled sects, exiled philosophers, tried Stoics for treason, exiled Jews, blamed Christians for the great fire, and only exempted Jews from certain civic pieties so long as they demonstrated their loyalty in other ways, e.g., through prayers for the sovereign. In such a society one could gain social credit by observing certain forms, whereas to ignore these forms might be dangerous indeed. No wonder that, as the authors point out, the Jews in the Diaspora emulated the Greeks in their use of titles and decrees. Such usage would provide protective coloration, although the authors do not suggest fear as a motive for the use of these forms but seem to prefer notions of acculturation, i.e., mutual accommodation between the majority and various minorities. Should this attention to the formalities no longer preserve their own ethnic and religious differences, the Jews could and did turn to Rome for protection (and not only exemptions); no wonder that many of them did not wish to alienate Rome.

The authors' attempt to help us understand the world of the first century requires a few additional chapters. One, for instance, might be on the subject of "Society and Nature." Beginning with the question of why sorcery and idolatry shared with adultery the distinction of being capital crimes, the authors could help the readers to understand how the boundaries between a society and the cosmos were blurred both in the law and in the experience of everyday life. If the universe were enchanted, and if social life itself were vulnerable to the effects of elemental spirits, the threat of improper liaisons was both existential and fundamental to the society as a whole. Another such chapter could help us to understand the way Palestinians of the first century may have experienced time. Was there a single, pivotal event in the past

from which the present derived its meaning? Was there indeed a present which could be distinguished by its indefinite duration from either the past or the future? To what extent did the shortage of time and invasion of the future into the present through eschatological expectation affect the credit that individuals were willing to extend to Greek or Roman authorities? Finally, a chapter on the encounter with death, both collective and individual, would help a modern reader to understand the peculiar valley in which the people of that period must have walked, who could never fully escape the shadow of kindred and folk who had been starved or slaughtered in the excruciating deaths of that catastrophic period. If this book prompts further collaboration both by what it accomplishes and by what it did not attempt to undertake, it will have a well-deserved place in the literature for the next generation.

RICHARD K. FENN

Princeton Theological Seminary

Harrington, Daniel J. *The New Testament: A Bibliography*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 242. \$8.95 (paper)

This book is highly recommended for those interested in the New Testament and who want guidance to the best and most recent publications on Texts and Tools, Introductions, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, New Testament Theology, and the World of the New Testament. The bibliography is selective, as it should be, and has in mind the general reader. The use of asterisks to signal the most important and reliable introduction under each category is thoughtful. Its use is discerning and impressively accurate. Uppermost in the author's mind is the English-speaking reader.

The vast increase of undigested data and the complexity of the fresh evidence from the period of Christian Origins lead Harrington to change his method when he comes to the "World of the New Testament." Here he admits that the area is "vast and complicated" and so requires special treatment.

Harrington is certainly the scholar to be asked to publish this bibliography. He is presently general editor of *New Testament Abstracts* and has served that distinguished publication since 1962. The most valuable publications are almost always listed, and the authoritative works are usually signaled with an asterisk. Harrington is clearly one of the best bibliographers in the world; and that requires, of course, mastery of the documents in the New Testament and their origins.

With such praise and respect, perhaps a supplementary list of authoritative publications would be in order. The following publications—all highly recommended and according to Harrington's apparent norms—bring the bibliography up to the present—the last entries were of works in 1985—or add some major works overlooked.

2. "Greek Text and Ancient Versions"

A. S. Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospels*. London, 1910.

B. M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament*. Oxford, 1977.

## 3. "Text Criticism"

K. Aland and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*. Leiden, 1987.

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The additions are intended to improve the usefulness of this bibliography. It is a valuable tool in research and reading. It is, of course, impressive to note the prominence given to New Testament specialists at Princeton Seminary.

JAMES H. CHARLESWORTH  
Princeton Theological Seminary

Fox, Richard W. *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. Pp. x + 340.

It is not easy to capture Reinhold Niebuhr in a portrait. He was always in movement, a force so interworking with the events of the 20th century that no pose could do him justice. A profoundly humble, self-deprecating man, he thundered and fought for his religious and social convictions. A constant critic of dogmatic certainty, he brought a generation of American Christians back to an awareness of sin and grace. As a theologian, he was hailed by political scientists as one of the profoundest of their own. These are only a few of the paradoxes of the life which Richard Fox has attempted to capture in this biography.

As a historian he has done extremely well. Not only Niebuhr's own massive literary production has been ordered and placed in the context of his life. His private correspondence with family and friends, the memories of those who knew him and information concerning the events and controversies in which he was involved from his earliest years to the end have all been brought into the picture. From now on all students of Niebuhr will use this work as authoritative reference concerning what he was thinking, writing, or doing at any point in his long career. A bibliographical essay at the end of the volume reviews most of the previous work about Niebuhr and relates this study to it. And finally an all-too-short epilogue gives the author's own appreciative evaluation of his subject.

This is, in short, a biography which every student of Niebuhr, during or after his time, will want to have and consult. This is both because of and in spite of the particular angle from which Niebuhr's life is examined. This is very much a psychological biography. A great deal of attention is given to family relations and the emotions they raise. The author searches for motivations on the psychological more than on the theological level. Personal rather than intellectual or faith struggles are highlighted. Where the evidence of letters and interviews does not bring these out, the author at times injects his own psychoanalytical surmises. Much of this is unfortunate. It diverts us from the more important dimensions of his life.

This is also a detailed chronology of Niebuhr's life. We accompany him year by year through his various adventures. Each episode of his life stands on its own and is analyzed as such. The impression is that of a succession of close-up action scenes. There is value in his method. Certain parts of Niebuhr's experience come more vividly into focus than they have before, most notably his early life, his experience in the First World War and in the Detroit pastorate, and his relations with a variety of



friends and associates. The character of his piety too comes into clear focus this way. We see him praying, preaching, and meditating in particular situations year by year.

The method also, however, has its drawbacks. Niebuhr's character in its depth and continuity tends to be lost in the confusion and variety of his responses to particular challenges and tasks. Some of the changes of theological, ethical, and political points of view which he undergoes seem more ultimate and inexplicable than they were in reality. We are very much aware of the activist Niebuhr. We learn something about his psyche. But the development of Niebuhr the thinker, the man of faith seeking understanding in dialogue with great figures of church and politics, both past and present, appears only on the edge of the biographer's field of vision.

This is unfortunate. It means that the reader seeking an introduction to this colossus of twentieth-century church and politics should not start here. Instead one should read one of Niebuhr's exciting works like *Moral Man and Immoral Society* or *The Children of Light and Children of Darkness*. Then one should turn to one of the interpreters of Niebuhr's thought—such as Paul Merkley or Ronald Stone—to place this work in perspective. Then having made Niebuhr's acquaintance one can profitably turn to Fox's biography to fill out the history of his life with the sympathetic and appreciative detail that Fox so wonderfully shows.

CHARLES C. WEST

Princeton Theological Seminary

Hall, Douglas John. *Imaging God: Dominions as Stewardship*. Grand Rapids and New York: Wm. B. Eerdmans and Friendship Press, 1986. Pp. viii + 248. \$8.95.

The deterioration of our natural environment is a fact that has been increasingly recognized in the last few decades. In the midst of escalating technology, our world has been ravaged by destructive forces that threaten to extinguish every form of life. Some blame this rape on the Judeo-Christian tradition. Citing the God-given commands of Genesis 1 (vs. 26-28) for humans to "have dominion over . . . all the earth" and to "subdue it," critics claim this gives license to humans to pillage the earth and squander its resources.

Douglas Hall, professor of Christian theology at McGill University in Montreal, here examines the concepts of "stewardship" and the "image of God" to see what has been wrong with some traditional Christian understandings of the relationship between humanity and extrahuman nature, to see the nature and extent of Christianity's culpability for the wrong relationships that have developed, and to point to "an alternative Christian conceptualization of this relationship." He focuses on the *imago Dei* in its Biblical and historical developments and what it means when applied to "the ontology of communion," "dimensions of human relatedness," and "being-with-nature."

Hall is quite direct in showing that "something is wrong" with the use of the world's resources. He targets the problem as human "sin" and suggests that scien-

tists and others from professional disciplines are also communicating a similar message. This sin is expressed as a "warped imagining of the self" so Hall calls for a reimagining of ourselves. Our Judeo-Christian heritage means there is present in our churches "sufficient wisdom, energy, and courage" both "to identify what is wrong and to begin to change it." A positive move toward a new image of the human self individually and corporately can come by rediscovering the "image of God" as a central Christian symbol. It can challenge what is wrong in us and "help to fashion an alternative way of imagining ourselves as human beings within the larger order of nature to which we belong."

Part of the Christian culpability for the present situation rises from a Christian ambiguity about this world. Some Christians have given the impression that "true Christian piety would be marked by a certain detachment from the world, perhaps even indifference toward it." But opposed to the notion that "spiritual salvation implies physical destruction," is the essential "worldliness" of the Hebrew Scriptures, the centrality of the Incarnation and Cross to the heart of Christian faith, and the love ethic which includes a love for the whole cosmos that God has created.

Hall calls for a strong doctrine of grace that stresses God's care and provision for the world as well as for a vigorous view of human responsibility. This implies a relationship between human and extrahuman nature that stresses the shared creaturehood of humanity and all other finite beings, a positive appreciation of creation, and the need to confess the sin of our distorting our creaturely essence. Hall rejects conventional views that humanity is "above" nature and also romantic fantasies putting humankind "back into" nature. The question is how to describe humanity positively and as a counter to the problems that have led to the crisis of nature.

From here, Hall studies the *imago Dei* in both its Scriptural background and its historical conceptions. He wants to reinterpret "the image of God" in light of current needs in a way that stresses the command of God to love the earth as we also love our neighbors and our enemies. The Old and New Testaments teach that humans must be seen in relational terms—as related to God, to the world, and to other people. Christologically, Jesus Christ is described as the Image of God (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; cf. Phil. 2:5ff.; Heb. 1:3) while the ecclesiological assertion is that those incorporated and embodied in Christ are "being restored to the creaturely status intended for them as human beings." Thus both Biblically and in the Reformation tradition, says Hall, the image of God is not a "substance" that could be altered though not lost. Rather, the image of God presupposed a relationship with God. It is not something humanity "has" or "possesses." It is rather "a life into which they are being called, a way of being that is already (proleptically) made available to them, but which in the meantime struggles with the old way of being, the way that belongs to 'the man of dust.'" The image implies an ethic "whose foundation and goal is just what we should expect it to be: love."

Hall analyzes two historical conceptions of the image: the "substantialist" or ontological, which locates the image of God in the powers of human reason and free-

dom, and the "relational," which indicates that "the human creature images [used as verb] its Creator because and insofar as it is 'turned toward' God. To be *imago Dei* does not mean to have something but to be and do something: to image God." Luther and Calvin emphasized the relational view and regarded the image "dynamically." Calvin's major metaphor was a "mirror" in which reflecting took place—both positively in relationship with God and negatively in the relationship of sin which is estrangement from God. Humans thus have a special calling to "image God." When this imaging is seen in a relational rather than a rationalist or ontological way, the hierarchical structuring of the world characteristic of the substantialist view will end. In the substantialist view, children, women, and others who were not believed to "measure up" to the highest conceptions of reason have been discriminated against.

The final three chapters explore the implications of the relational view in the inner-relatedness of all life with each other, the natural order and God. These foci may be distinguished but not separated. For they are "integrally and inseparably linked with one another, to the extent that there is no appropriate relationship with God that is not at the same time a new being—with our own kind and otherkind, and vice versa." This means that "given the priority of our being-with-God (God's sovereignty, in traditional Reformed dogma), no human creature can legitimately be regarded as subordinate or superior to another." Further, since God's sovereignty is expressed in suffering servanthood, "every human being is called to take upon him/herself the service of the other." In terms of authority, the only authentic authority is "authority that serves." When our "imaging of God" is defined in a Christological way, argues Hall, it radically alters traditional notions of "dominion" (Gen. 1) so that "dominion" becomes a way of designating the role of humans in creation that entails "stewardship" and "stewardship ultimately interpreted as love: sacrificial, self-giving love" (*agape*).

This solid work gives us a substantial and challenging base from which to view our environmental crises in a Christian perspective. It does not let Christians off the hook easily for being part of the problems. But it also propels us to see and act on the vast implications of our task of stewardship as we "image God."

DONALD K. MCKIM

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Turner, James. *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985. Pp. 316.

That Americans are a religious people is not a new observation. After all, modern opinion polls and observers as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville have remarked on our national preoccupation with God. We are regularly informed that vast numbers of us profess faith in one form of deity or other, most of us pray, many attend formal worship, others attempt to live as if faith has a claim on their behavior. Religious

belief is such a widespread and accepted part of our culture that we often forget its roots run much deeper than the culture. When we say that America is a nation of religious believers, we simply mean that most Americans share with the rest of the human race that God-consciousness which separates us from the beasts. Like our remotest ancestors who left oblations under trees for the gods of field and stream, Americans, in general, believe that we are not alone in the universe.

I say "in general" because religious belief—however widespread—is not universal. There are among us principled men and women who have opted out of the God question, either by reserving judgement because enough information is not available to make a decision, or by frankly stating their unbelief. This is surprising because unbelief—far more than a simple personal decision one makes in the privacy of one's heart—is a significant, and comparatively recent, departure from the way the entire human race has understood the world and our place in it. As James Turner, professor of history at the University of Michigan, points out in his *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America*: "For over a thousand years Europeans had assumed the existence of God. Their faith might be orthodox or heretical, simple or complex, easy or troubled. . . . Yet failing to believe somehow in some sort of deity was not merely rare; it was a bizarre aberration." Today, this "bizarre aberration" is the dominant outlook in influential sectors of our society. From the organs of news gathering and reporting, to primetime sitcoms, to university campuses and art galleries, to the halls of Congress and the chambers of our courts, principled unbelief is the lens through which our world and the events in it are seen and interpreted.

Such a massive shift in thinking has had profound consequences for our public life. "Most Americans . . ." professor Turner says, "continue to believe in God; for these individuals belief can matter a great deal. But for the common life of our culture, it matters very much less. The option of not believing has eradicated God as a shared basis of thought and experience and retired him to a private or at best sub-cultural role. The bulk of modern thought has simply dispensed with God."

What brought this astonishing situation about? In this book professor Turner sets himself to answer the question, "Why did it become possible not to believe in God?"

Histories of the West since the French Enlightenment commonly portray the rise of unbelief as a major victory in the war between the forces of light and reason and the minions of obscurantism and priestly superstition. Religious faith is presented as oppressive, a lower form of knowledge which must inevitably give way before the triumphal advance of unfettered human reason. And yet, according to professor Turner, the rise of unbelief was not at all inevitable. To be sure, the breakup of church authority during the Protestant Reformation, the explosion of knowledge in the realm of the physical sciences after the Enlightenment, and the socioeconomic dislocations of the Industrial Revolution all brought tremendous pressures to bear on religious beliefs. But religion had weathered similar storms in the past and remained a vital force in the public life of societies. Something else is needed to explain the sudden rise to intellectual respectability of religious unbelief, and professor Turner finds it—in the church.



It is the contention of this book that, "unbelief was not something that 'happened to' religion. . . . On the contrary, religion caused unbelief. In trying to adapt their religious beliefs to socioeconomic change, to new moral challenges, to novel problems of knowledge, to the tightening standards of science, the defenders of God slowly strangled Him" (emphasis his).

The "defenders of God" to whom professor Turner refers were the progressive church people of the time who scrambled to make religion more palatable to modern minds by reinterpreting it in the light of a changing world. By insisting on the ultimate reasonableness of religion, by identifying the workings of God with the laws of nature as they were discovered in the physical sciences, and by making morality rather than communion with a transcendent God the essence of religious belief, countless ministers, theologians, and lay people attempted "to defuse modern threats to the traditional bases of belief by bringing God into line with modernity."

Over a period of three centuries, their efforts succeeded; unfortunately, theirs was a pyrrhic victory: God, the Ruler of Nature, "was abstracted into natural scientific explanations" which "yielded no longer evidence of God but simply evidence of nature." God, the Moral Governor, "was identified with purely human activities and aspirations" which opened the way for secular humanitarianism and the doctrine of Progress. God, the mysterious Lord of Heaven, "was much diminished as believers shifted the main focus of their concern from God's transcendence of earthly things to His comparability with humanity, its wants, its aspirations."

These attempts to bring religion into conformity with human hopes and needs backfired, for if God is only Humanity writ large, then Humanity is God, and service to Humanity becomes the main priority. The progressives of a century and more ago forgot that there is more to religion than morality and good works. Their "fatal slip" was that they "too often forgot the transcendence essential to any worthwhile God. They committed religion *functionally* to making the world better in human terms and *intellectually* to modes of knowing God fitted only for understanding this world," forgetting that God is not Humanity, and God's purposes are not our own (emphasis his). In the end, it was well-meaning church people who prepared the way for our present crisis of unbelief.

The persistent tug of unbelief has occupied humankind for countless ages. Many have succumbed to it with varying degrees of regret, but it is only in our time that unbelief has become an accepted option. In this reviewer's opinion, professor Turner lays too much responsibility for this situation at the door of the church, while underestimating the propensity to unbelief which is in each of us. However the rise of modern unbelief, and the church's role in it, was a revolution of the first magnitude, the effects of which we are only now beginning to digest. With it, "the traditional linchpin" of our society was removed with the result that, "our culture . . . now lacks a center." In addition, this revolution in thought sowed the seeds of our "distinctively modern angst," since, "if divine purpose does not inhere in the cosmos, then human beings must define the meaning of their own brief lives amid a pointless vastness."



Professor Turner has written an enormously interesting and provocative book which should be read by serious believers of every persuasion, lest we continue to reduce God to the sum of our own hopes and aspirations, thereby preparing the way for a greater increase of unbelief and even more bizarre—and terrible—aberrations.

CARL R. SCHMAHL

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Yaseen, Leonard C. *The Jesus Connection: To Triumph over Anti-Semitism*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1985. Pp. 154. \$9.95.

The subtitle is a clear indication of the purpose of this paperback which chronicles the many positive contributions of Jews to our civilization. It begins with the awkward historical fact that Jews have been blamed for the death of Jesus, considered by this book as a remarkable religious genius, and a Jew, which makes it generally impossible for Jews, because of Christian persecution, to accept Jesus "as one of their great religious leaders" (p. 5).

The book lists—rather than evaluates—the debts owed by all Gentiles to Jewish doctors for the availability of digitalis, insulin, streptomycin, polio vaccine, and plasma in blood banks. It records the contribution of modern Jewish writers like Bellow, Arthur Miller, Tom Stoppard, and other minor writers (all treated as of the same distinction), and of the contributions of such visual artists as Chagall, Nevelson, Pissaro, Rothko, Modigliani, Shahn, Segal, Lichtenstein, and Soutine, but Sir Jacob Epstein the sculptor is omitted. Distinguished Jewish musicians are mentioned including Mendelssohn, Berlin, Gershwin, and Bernstein, while many others are also omitted. The Jewish actors and comedians, male and female, are many, as is well known, but some of them look as "waspy" as a Viking, such as Leslie Howard, Paul Newman, and Cary Grant. Many Jews have also been distinguished politicians and scientists (none more so than Einstein).

This admirable book has only one defect, or perhaps two. In the first place it does not list the outstanding Jewish thinkers and philosophers such as Maimonides or Spinoza in the past, and the twentieth-century magi such as Bergson, Alexander, Maritain (who converted to Catholicism), and Wittgenstein, and another convert—Simone Weil. In addition, some on the roll of honor might have been omitted to emphasize the greater importance of those included.

HORTON DAVIES  
Princeton University

Nichols, J. Randall. *The Restoring Word: Preaching as Pastoral Communication*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Pp. 216.

Dr. Nichols has written a book that is "must reading" for pastors, seminary students, and teachers of pastoral theology, worship, and preaching. Under the meta-

phor of restoration, Nichols struggles—that is his word—to integrate pastoral care and preaching, to overcome what he sees as the false distinction between prophetic and priestly functions in the proclamation of the gospel, to explore the dynamics of pastoral communication in preaching, including its worship context, to identify what he calls “issue clusters” for pastoral preaching, and to suggest how these might be given sermonic treatment. The book ends with a sermon by Dr. Nichols entitled, “The City of Sadness.” The sermon is poetic, with more than a faint trace of the style of Paul Scherer. It is self-disclosive in the best sense of that term. And it is suggestive rather than prescriptive in content and effect. Clearly, when it comes to sermon composition, Nichols, if I may say so, practices what he preaches.

Can he write evocatively? Try this for a sampler: “Sadness is the memory of what I called a rare wild bird, and the straining of eyes to catch once more a fleeting glance of her heartbreaking beauty. It is the cold double ribbon of steel that unfurls itself behind a departing train and its precious cargo. . . .” Or this: “Some of the most beautiful music I ever heard was the chanting of Greek peasant women, tears streaming down their lined and hardened faces, in a church on Corfu one Good Friday evening. I asked someone . . . why they were weeping. ‘Because,’ he said, ‘their Christ is dead.’ I have often thought that I will never understand what resurrection means until I can weep like that.”

Dr. Nichols is not just a wordsmith, however. He is a pastoral theologian whose observations have been honed by careful and extensive research. His discussion of the nature of God-talk is succinct, clear, compelling. The way he uses the clinical-therapeutic experience to give fresh insight into the nature, purpose, and effects of preaching is most helpful. And his use of Paul Pruyser’s theological categories for pastoral diagnosis in developing his own approach to the mapping of the experience of worship as a “liturgy of restoration” is frankly brilliant. For Nichols restoration implies a commitment to the past and the future, to the old and the new, to the here and the elsewhere. A homiletics of restoration consequently has an ecological concern for persons in the totality of their relationships to each other, to their world, and to God. So preachers are not priests or prophets in the old sense. They do not pluck up or plant. They restore. They strive to have an impact upon the “personally invested concerns” of their listeners and “hope to nurture an appropriately interdependent community [of persons] with competence to take responsibility both for their own lives and for the ‘care of the earth.’ ”

In *The Restoring Word*, J. Randall Nichols offers an image of the preacher as gardener. And as a gardener’s first love is for his or her garden, so a preacher’s primary allegiance is not to a body of theological content or an institution, but to the people God has created and called. Dr. Nichols is convinced that preaching is powerful, not because of the impact of any one sermon, but because of the accumulated effects of preaching over a long period of time. As Emily Dickinson noted that “the soul selects its own society,” so sermonic discourse selects and shapes its audience for better or worse. The gardener in the pulpit thus needs to become conscious of just what

kind of growth he or she is nurturing. That means paying attention not only to what one does, but also to how one goes about doing it, for preaching not only can help—it can harm. Nichols explicates how it can help. But in contrast to most of the literature in the field of homiletics, he explicates in detail how it can harm as well. Furthermore, by doing so, it seems to me he has opened up an area that fairly begs for further research from the perspective of a number of different disciplines: rhetorical ethics, social psychology, and communication studies to name just three.

I would observe that here and there in *The Restoring Word* there are what may seem to some to be stylistic lapses. The image of restoration, for instance, occasionally gets lost in extensive analytical detail. At other times it gets blurred by the introduction of other potent, extended metaphors, such as the metaphor of the spiritual journey. Yet I would not want the analysis curtailed or the variety of metaphors entirely eliminated. So the stylistic lapses may not be faults after all, but necessities. The ambiguity of certain rhetorical flourishes, once in a while, may give some readers pause, too. For example, this sentence: "Under such banners as 'liberation theology,' perhaps, we want worship to have a more direct influence on the world of state and structure." Now if that's a critique of a kind of political posturing in the name of relevance—which I think it is—I'm all for it. But if it implies a dismissal of potential contributions of liberation theologies to our understanding of our responsibilities in worship and preaching, there no doubt are those who would feel justified in raising an objection.

Such questions of style as have just been raised, however, do not diminish at all my estimate of the import of this book. The book holds and illumines so well so many of the issues that have deep personal and professional significance for those of us who preach and teach preaching that I can't help feeling that we *ourselves* are being held in it by a brother who knows us well and wants what is best for us. For those of us concerned about preaching as pastoral communication, *The Restoring Word* is more than good reading. It is good therapy. And I think its influence will be profound and lasting.

CHARLES L. BARTOW  
San Francisco Theological Seminary

Armstrong, Richard S. *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986. Pp. 216. \$9.95.

Richard Armstrong's books on evangelism have been gratefully used by pastors and lay leaders in many denominations. His titles include *The Oak Lane Story* (1971), *Service Evangelism* (1979), *The Pastor as Evangelist* (1984), and *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship* (1986). He has recently completed a leader's *Manual* and a participants' *Workbook* for an evangelism training course for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be published in 1987.

In *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship* the author wants to tell his readers how non-members can be attracted to the church, and how worship services and sermons can

be more effective in bringing nonmembers into a life-transforming faith in Jesus Christ and a life-sustaining membership in His church.

Ministers gain the skills and knowledge their calling requires from three sources: from their seminary training, from their own experience, and from other ministers. Dr. Armstrong wants his readers to add what he has learned from his experience to what they have learned from theirs. He does not offer an unbroken recital of successes, but his failures are instructive. He is like the sea captain of whom it was said, "He knows every dangerous rock along this coast because he has hit most of them."

Since 1980 Dr. Armstrong has been the professor of ministry and evangelism at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he is still adding to all he has learned about preaching, worship, and evangelism. This is what his latest book intends to pass on to other ministers. It makes *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship* an ideal gift for a graduation or an ordination. It will help a new minister start out a long way ahead.

The book is divided into two parts, the first concentrating on the pastor-evangelist as worship leader, and the second focusing on the pastor-evangelist as preacher. A lengthy chapter on the Sunday worship service is followed by chapters on the sacraments, weddings, funerals, and ordination and installation services. Suggestions for improving the Sunday worship bulletins are an example of the book's detailed practicality. Dr. Armstrong has collected bulletins from hundreds of churches of various sizes and denominations. From a representative sample he listed forty-five desirable features, which he rated according to their relative importance for evangelism. The total score is a measurement of a bulletin's usefulness as an evangelistic instrument. Thus the book provides a valuable checklist of what a church bulletin should contain and a way of determining how it can be improved. The fact that 73% of the sample scored less than "Good" is proof enough that such an instrument is needed. (See pp. 26-30 and Appendix B on pp. 174-77.)

In a very helpful chapter on the sacraments the author underscores the importance of planning, instruction, interpretation, and communication. He propounds a number of crucial questions pertaining to the Lord's Supper which need to be settled in advance (pp. 48-49). He offers not a treatise on sacramental theology but some practical suggestions for administering the sacraments with evangelistic sensitivity.

His advice about weddings combines solid practicality with profound spiritual insight. The pastor's preliminary conferences offer a precious opportunity to point the couple toward a deeper relationship with Christ and the Church. A discussion of the meaning of the marriage vows can lead to serious thinking about the place of Christ in marriage and family life. The mood and manners of the participants in a wedding rehearsal can clash with the spiritual nature of the marriage ceremony. "You can be sure of one thing," writes Armstrong, "they didn't come to the rehearsal looking for a spiritual experience" (p. 55). The minister, therefore, has to take charge by asking everyone to be seated, offering a prayer, explaining the meaning and symbolism of each part of the service, and instructing the participants regarding their various functions in the service. In this way everyone can truly enter into what is happening.

Young ministers who are apprehensive about funerals can be reassured by what



is said on this subject. At a time of grief and pain, when sympathetic people long above all for some way to be of help, a minister has many ways of helping. The prayers, Scripture readings, and the minister's own words at the service, if chosen and delivered with evangelistic sensitivity, can be not only a source of comfort and hope to the bereaved family but also an appealing introduction to the gospel for any unchurched persons attending the service. The chapter on "Funerals" has a wealth of good counsel for the pastor-evangelist.

The book also makes available to readers the benefits of the author's devotion to Bible study. In the chapter entitled "Presenting the Gospel," Dr. Armstrong's treatment of various aspects of the good news is biblically based and theologically balanced, and his concluding chapter on "Prizing the Pulpit" conveys the author's high view of the preaching ministry. "Preaching is a sacred trust and a holy task," he writes. "If we truly prize the pulpit, we will value the importance of preaching" (p. 156), and we will heed these two injunctions: Never betray the trust, and never neglect the task!

It is difficult to summarize a book that is filled with so many helpful ideas. Nor is its usefulness limited to the two parts into which it is divided, for there are 42 pages of appendices, including the author's inaugural address when he became the first occupant of Princeton Seminary's Ashenfelter Chair of Ministry and Evangelism. In the address, entitled, "The Integrity of Evangelism," Dr. Armstrong presents the theology and style of evangelism which he advocates and represents. There are also sermons, examples of what he calls "Scriptural Reflections," a sample "Preaching Plan," and the Church Bulletin Evaluation Instrument.

The book is further enhanced by some extensive endnotes, which contain useful bibliographical references and other information. One other sterling feature of *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship* is its very complete 15-column Index. A glance at its entries reveals the amazing range of topics this book touches upon. The Index makes this a handy guidebook to a very wide variety of religious interests.

Most preachers think of the sermon as their chance to bring the people in the pews to a deeper faith in Christ and to Christian living. But Christ is also found through the other elements of worship. There are many excellent books on preaching and on worship, but Dr. Armstrong has demonstrated that a book which deals with both of these closely related subjects has many advantages. The same minister usually prepares the sermons and other parts of the worship service. He or she has to understand, therefore, how each function supports the others. I know of no other book which offers as much practical help or inspiration in this regard as does *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship*.

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McGinnis, Alan Loy. *Bringing Out the Best in People*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985. Pp. 191. \$3.95 (paper).

Self-help books are legion. Their "how to" motif attracts readers by the millions. Many applied psychologists and pseudo-therapists have earned mini-fortunes through fashioning engaging titles, analyzing the human psyche, and telling us how to get the most out of life. The key to their popularity, i.e., making best-seller rating, lies not usually in originality or profundity of thought, but in tuning in upon that strange inner yearning that makes Mr. and Ms. Average watch soap operas and buy lottery tickets. Everyone seems to want to arrive by way of ten easy lessons, but few of these writers come forth with a serious and viable answer to the more basic question: what for?

In this, his second book on this general theme, author McGinnis, who is a pastor-turned-therapist, opens up the whole question and problem of motivation and in the course of fourteen concise chapters elaborates upon twelve basic principles which provide guidelines towards realizing the potential in ourselves and, in turn, bringing out the best in others. He writes well and interestingly and marshals in defense of these principles scores of anecdotes, cases, success stories, and statistics about human ups and downs from the world of sports, business, family life, and so forth. Every instance or incident, curiously enough, is the stuff of a neat package to which failure is a foreign element, and then with a wave of the hand and a Q.E.D. maxim or aphorism the matter is closed.

The philosophy of life advocated by books of this kind is open to question from the perspective of the Christian faith. The Shorter Catechism defines "man's chief end" as "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." This is the "what for?" with which all our human enterprises, struggles, and motivations are "shot through," colored, and shaped. It is useful and astute certainly to set up goals for ourselves and others, but the "why" of any one of these goals is the litmus test of its credibility and of its realizing eventually a community of the good and true. Many of these authors discount the "me first" philosophy and lifestyle, but without their addressing the question "what's it for?" that is what indirectly these success stories espouse and endorse.

Instead, then, of being helpful, such writings, sermons, and tracts of the positive thinking genre raise some serious questions? Are our objectives in life to be colored and our motivations in thought and action determined always by the dollar sign, or by our being "an achiever," or by our qualifying as "a winner"? Is an attempt ever made to evaluate or hail the contribution to life and society of those whom the world calls losers? Has our Christian outlook been so obsessed with Horatio Alger and Ann Landers that we can put Mother Teresa, Lee Iacocca, and Jesus in the same bin? Probably our present need is not so much a facile miscellany of "how to" nuts and bolts to get us to "the top" as it is a recall to the servant image that invests itself in others so that in and through both—us and them—the new life of the Gospel is realized. And then possibly, in Mark Antony's phrase, "there let it work," each will

fulfill his or her potential, even though it be a life of nameless service like the several anonymous disciples who "came in a little ship dragging the net full of fishes" (John 21:8). "Whosoever shall lose his or her life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35)—maybe this is how the best in others and ourselves is brought out and made to become the substance of a higher purpose in which all of us together volunteer to invest everything we have and are.

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